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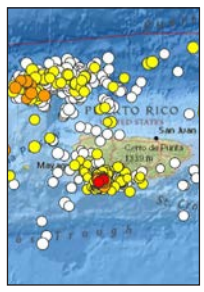

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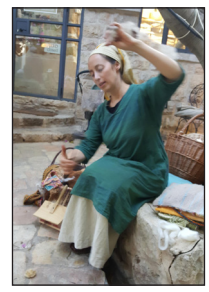

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Reform Jewish movement votes to support reparations for African-Americans

Ben Sales

CHICAGO (JTA) — The Reform movement, the country's largest Jewish denomination, declared its support for reparations for African-Americans at its biennial conference.

The resolution, which was approved by voice vote at the 5,000-person gathering of the Union for Reform Judaism, calls for "a federal commission to study and develop proposals for reparations to redress the historic and continuing effects of slavery and subsequent systemic racial, societal, and economic discrimination against Black Americans."

It said that reparations can take the form of anything from an expression of remorse to education to monetary compensation.

Reform leaders painted the resolution as the next step in the movement's historical support for civil rights. The movement passed its first resolution in support of civil rights in 1950 and has passed four more. Two came in the past five years, addressing reforms to the way law enforcement treats African-Americans, and racial inequities within the Reform movement.

"Combating hate is the most urgent call of our time," Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, said in a keynote address Thursday night. "We must be anti-racist. That means taking an active part to eliminate racism in our society. It's our job as Reform Jews to continue this fight. We must face down the structures of racism and we must knock them down."

TBE members at the Reform Biennial in Chicago: Front Row: David Gitterman, Susan Gitterman, Rachel Glick, Cantor Regina Hayut, Bette Cotzin, Midge Cone Back Row: Rabbi Daniel Alter, Candace Bulkley, Greg Lewis, Ketl Freedman-Doan, Abbie Egherman, Trina Fuller, Sonya Lewis, Joe Pollack

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BIC congregant files lawsuit against picketers and city

Special to the WJN

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported on December 24, 2019 that a member of an Ann Arbor synagogue has filed a federal lawsuit against the groups and individuals who have been picketing with antisemitic signs outside of Beth Israel Congregation every Shabbat morning for 16 years. The suit also names Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor and four other city officials as joint defendants. The groups have been named as Deir Yassin Remembered and Jewish Witnesses for Peace and Friends.

Detroit attorney Marc Susselman filed the 85-page complaint on behalf of his client Marvin Gerber, a member of Beth Israel Congregation. The congregation itself is not party to the lawsuit. Beth Israel board president and Rabbi Nadav Caine issued this statement in response to the news of the lawsuit: "While Beth Israel Congregation is in no way associated with this lawsuit, the activity outside of our house of worship every week continues to be offensive and reprehensible, and includes anti-Semitic hate speech. Our decision not to participate in this particular lawsuit was based on discussion

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JFS in permanent home

Joanne Jarvi, special to the WJN

On Wednesday, January 8, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County made 2245 S. State our permanent home. Over five years ago, a special mezuzah was optimistically purchased for what seemed like an unattainable dream by immediate past JFS Board President, Susan Fisher, on a trip with her dear late husband to Morocco. That special mezuzah was at last affixed to the front door of 2245 S. State by Carol Amster and Mark Berg recognizing the latest milestone of many, including the establishment of The Herb Amster Center, that changed the trajectory of JFS's development and growth. Rabbi Nadav Caine of Beth Israel Congregation offered these words along with the mezuzah blessing:

"We are commanded to put a mezuzah up with the Shema to remind us that it is in life's transitions that holiness is important: When you are going from one place to another or when you fear going to bed and not knowing what the next day will bring.

The people who are going to be passing through this door, that join us all here in spirit, are those people going through life's transitions. It could be aging, it could recovery, it could be mental struggles, it could be trying to find how they fit in to a larger family. A family that you have made possible through holy services.

It is a reminder that what is happening in life's transitions and in need is love. And that's what you make possible here."

Thanks to the brilliant and tireless work of JFS Board Member Mark Berg and the support of our dedicated Space Committee, JFS purchased our home of more than a decade. It had been a longstanding goal for our agency to mitigate potential displacement. When the opportunity arose this year to secure a permanent home, we seized it. None of this would have been possible without the profound support of our committed advisors, supporters, and friends.

When the McKinley Executive Building was placed on the market, JFS strategically approached this complex, timely, and nuanced opportunity to finally own our own space. Sustainability is of paramount concern to all agencies such as ours and while our ongoing challenges still include lack of sufficient funding and recruiting and retaining talent, we can now remove addressing long-term physical

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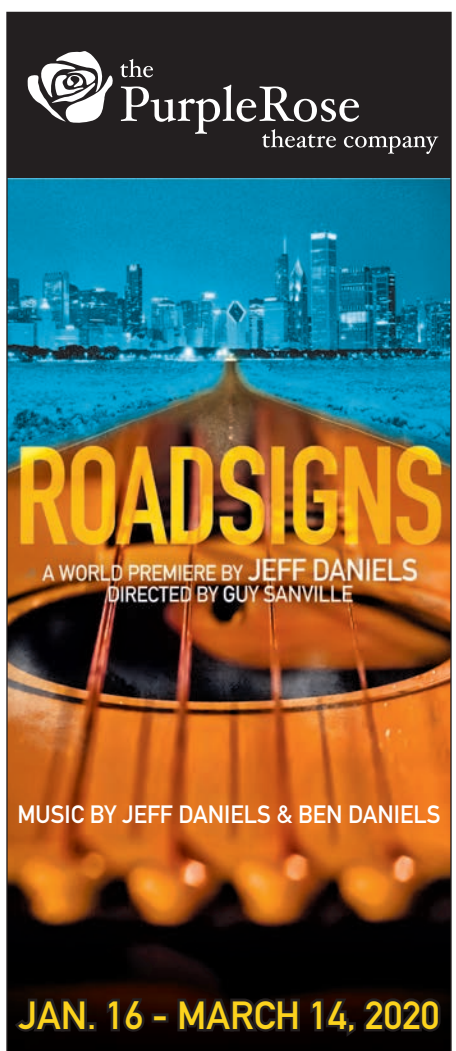

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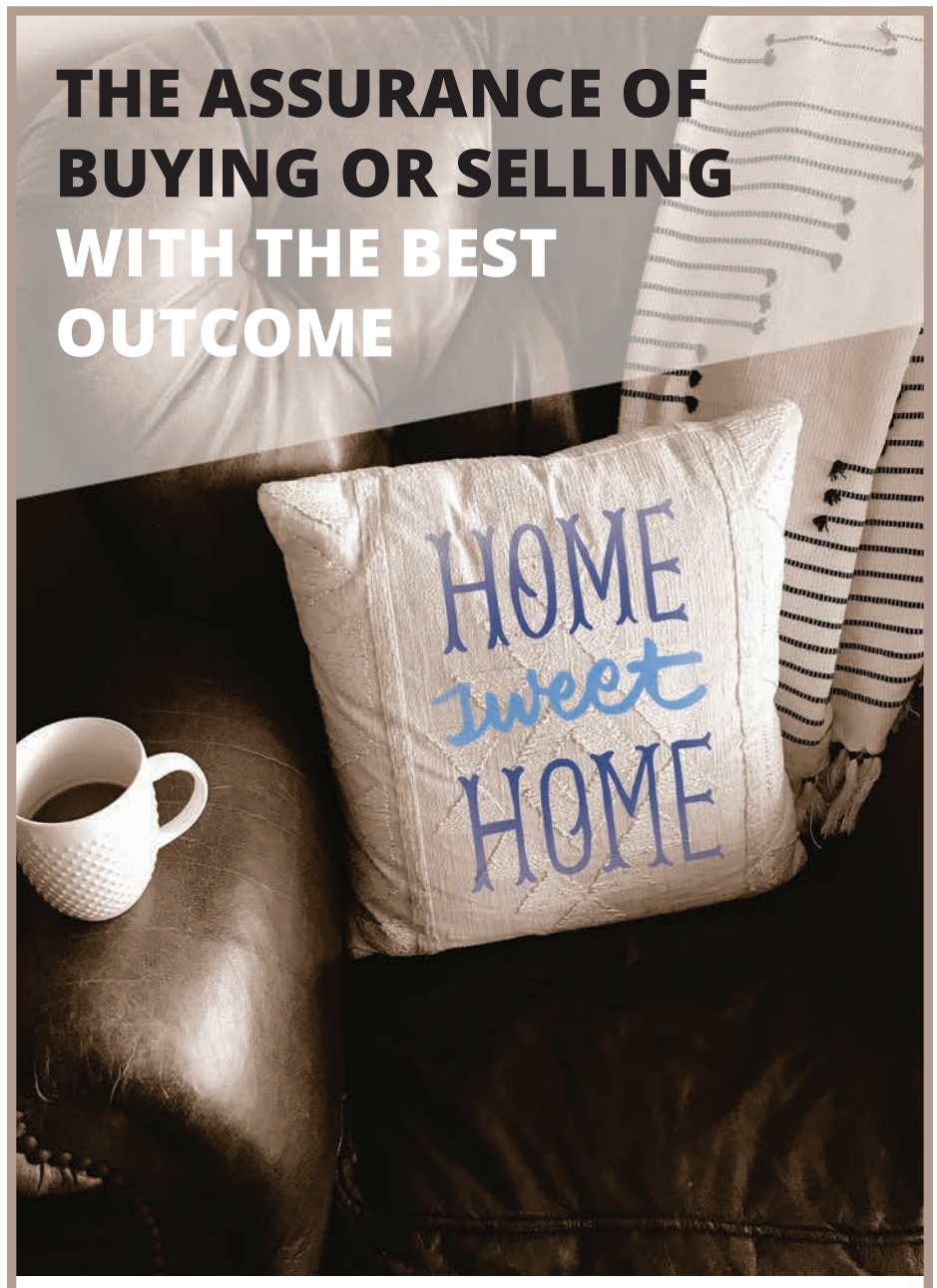

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Extra copies of the *Washtenaw Jewish News* are available at locations throughout Washtenaw County.

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YOUR CHILD deserves the BEST Education

Help Our Children Get The Best Education And Complete The 2020 Census.

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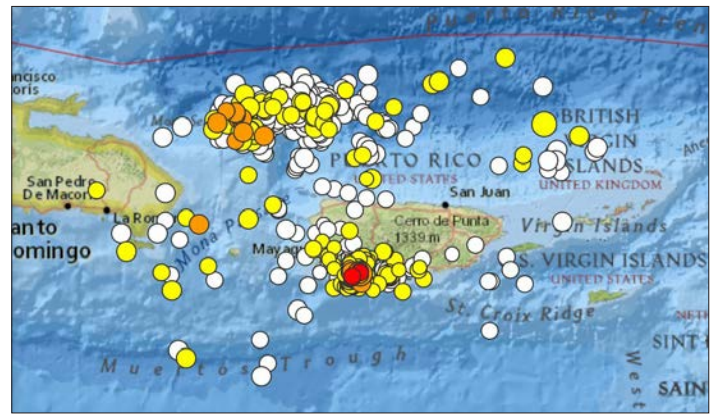
Two ways to help Puerto Rico recover from earthquakes

Special to the WJN

The earthquakes in southwestern Puerto Rico that began in late December 2019 have continued for at least one month, often with dozens of quakes each day. Ann Arbor Jewish community activist Fran Martin reported early in January that her daughter-in-law Angeline Sina was in Puerto Rico visiting relatives when the largest of the earthquakes hit on January 7. Sina writes, "I arrived in my home town to celebrate Three Kings Day, our special holiday that tributes the three wise men. That evening, we had our first earthquake. When I asked my Mom, what it was, she responded: 'The ground has been shaking for the last few months.' On January 7, the Southwest of Puerto Rico was struck by 6.4 magnitude earthquake, the strongest of a series of quakes and the most powerful to hit the island in over a century leading to an island-wide power outage, limited water service, and school closures.

"Thousands of families are in shelters because their homes were destroyed or they fear they will collapse while they sleep. Puerto Rico's governor has declared a state of emergency, thousands of students are out of school and at least 500 schools could collapse after the recent seismic activity. This is extremely worrisome as many schools have been closed due to Hurricane Maria in 2017. Families are once again living without power



"Image of the 612 recorded earthquakes affecting Puerto Rico between December 26 2019 and January 2, 2020

or access to clean water, sleeping in tents, under the sun and the 90-degree weather, many without any hope of knowing if they will be able to return to their homes or how to rebuild it. Many homes were built informally and don't have insurance.

"Our organization, Friends of Puerto Rico, which supports the economic development of the people of Puerto Rico through entrepreneurial initiatives, education, and creating opportunities for women and girls has launched the SEEDS fund: https://www.friendsofpuertorico.org/donate. Funds raised will be directed towards students that survived both Hurricane María and the recent earthquakes to allow for their education to carry on and not be detained due to these unfortunate events. Your donations will allow us to continue our education programs, mentoring them and teaching them leadership and life skills. It will provide students an alternate safe location, healthy meals, school materials and items lost in the schools due to the earthquake."

The Ann Arbor community also had the opportunity to learn from Jewish Puerto Rican activist and writer Aurora Levins Morales when she visited Ann Arbor two years ago as a guest lecturer in the Jewish Communal Leadership Program. Morales has since moved back to her hometown of Maricao, Puerto Rico, which has been severely affected by the earthquakes and she is raising money to help the community get back on its feet. From the GoFundMe page that she set up: " I recently moved back to my home community of Indiera, Maricao, in the western mountains of Puerto Rico. You can find out about my prior work at www.auroralevinsmorales.com. Since December 28, 2019 Puerto Rico has been experiencing hundreds of earthquakes, two of them over 6 on the Richter scale. The quakes have caused heavy damage along Puerto Rico's coast, but small mountain communities have also been hit hard and get far less attention. In Maricao there are many seriously damaged houses, and our community store, which has been the heart of the barrio for sixty years, has been destroyed. The owners have put up a temporary kiosk style shop to continue supplying food, and are distributing contributions. My family members and friends are raising funds to help rebuild the store, and in the meantime, help restock the kiosk. We will divide the funds between support for the store, and supplies for displaced people in our community to meet basic needs. We plan to buy camping supplies, food, water menstrual supplies and blankets for people who are sleeping out. I am not working with a specific organization, but I have a lifetime of relationships I am relying on to help me distribute supplies equitably and will consult with the storekeeper, the priest, the school director and community elders." You can donate at https://www.gofundme.com/f/indiera-earthquake-recovery. ■

THRIVE Counseling offers "Crucial Consultations"

Joanne Jarvi, special to the WJN

If, by some miracle, you wake up tomorrow and a pressing problem is now gone, what would your life be like?

In answering this question, people tend to reveal what they want most, whether it's a peaceful relationship with a spouse, a lifting of depression, or a more fulfilling job.

Advocates of "Single-Session Therapy" (SST) argue that what is so often a person's only therapeutic encounter should be used to maximize its effect. But they also contend that for many, if not most, people, one therapy session can leave them with the tools and the encouragement to handle their problems on their own.

"Some of what we are trying to do is help clients get unstuck or back on track," says Deana Smith, Clinical Director. "Single session therapy, this kind of model, can be extremely effective getting people unstuck or see something from a new perspective. Clients sometimes just want to deal with their problems, not rework their whole life story. The SST approach is appealing to clients because it targets their key concerns."

Crucial Consultations is a Single Session Therapy service meant to complement the existing mental-health services at THRIVE Counseling. "It's not unlike a walk-in clinic at your physician's office," Smith said, adding that people using the service will walk away with a plan to address an immediate need.

For those who may need more than just that one session, there will be an opportunity to refer them on to other services.

Most likely candidates for SST are those who want to deal with a specific problem or need reassurance that their reaction to a troubling situation is normal. Good candidates also include those who have dealt successfully with life problems in the past or who have managed the current one for some time on their own, or those who are tired of feeling "stuck" in a strong reaction to past events.

Single Session Therapy is not right for those who need immediate hospitalization, including suicidal, psychotic or intoxicated patients or those suffering from conditions requiring medication, like manic depression and schizophrenia. This approach is best for people seeking a solution to a problem rather than more in-depth self understanding.

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact Caroline Kennedy Butler, LMSW, THRIVE Counseling Clinical Services Manager at 734-769-0209. ■

JFS in permanent home, continued from page 1

space from the list. We are extremely grateful to more than a dozen agency friends who provided loans towards a down payment which allowed us to secure a mortgage from the Bank of Ann Arbor. NOMA Real Estate Services was selected to manage the property.

Ultimately, JFS' ownership of 2245 and holding it for a social purpose may be a bulwark, along with the Protecting Our Future Campaign, that help us secure our future. While we celebrate this milestone, we also anticipate a challenging year ahead, affected by changing policies and dwindling non-profit resources. National, state, regional, and local funding landscapes have shifted dramatically leaving several JFS programs underfunded or completely un-funded, such as Transportation, Specialty Food Pantry, Older Adult Services and other core mission services. As we wish all of these looming variables were in our orbit of control, we are comforted for the ability to address at least this one.

We embark on a great journey to protect and grow the future of JFS. Any contribution to our agency will provide vital support for our community.

It is a universal dream of every family, refugee, older adult, and community member we work with to have a safe and secure permanent home. Every family needs a home and it gives us great pride and pleasure to announce that our family now has one. ■

Towards a more inclusive, united, and secure community

Eileen Freed, special to the WJN

On December 28, dozens of local community members, led by Ann Arbor Chabad House, gathered to light a giant Chanukah menorah at Liberty Square in downtown Ann Arbor. A central theme of Chanukah is to be proud and comfortable in our Jewishness and to share the light with those around us. We are fortunate to live in a place and time in which we can do so safely and with the participation of community leaders like Ann Arbor Police Chief Michael Cox and City Council Member Julie Grand.

Sadly, that same evening, the light and joy of Chanukah was dimmed by a horrific attack on a Chanukah party at the home of Rabbi Chaim Rottenberg in Monsey, New York.

This attack was one of the latest in a wave of antisemitic activity that has shaken many of us. We've seen a growth in violence against Jews, such as the shooting at a kosher supermarket in New Jersey and Jews being beaten on the streets of New York, graffiti and vandalism of Jewish communal institutions, anti-Jewish tropes used by politicians in the United States and abroad, and even weekly blatant antisemitic hate speech and harassment outside one of our own community synagogues.

The recent proliferation of such attacks against Jewish people and institutions is disturbing and infuriating. We cannot let this defeat us nor cause us to be any less proud or visible as a community.

We must be proactive in fostering positive relationships with people of other cultures and faiths. For the past year, Federation board member Decky Alexander has been laying the groundwork for a Jewish Community Relations Committee (JCRC), which, as JCRCs do in communities around the United States, will provide a framework for engagement as Jews with the broader community. A series of "Conversations with 7" were held in which people from across all segments of the Jewish community gathered over dinner to talk about the issues that concerned them as Jews and about what a JCRC might look like in Ann Arbor. Several participants gathered in January for a "convening" to explore the common themes and begin to develop a plan to move forward.

In another effort to connect with the wider community, Federation is partnering with *2 for Seder,* a project developed by the daughter-in-law of Joyce Fienberg z"l, one of eleven people murdered at the Tree of Life in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Last year, over 1000 Jews participated by inviting their non-Jewish friends, neighbors and colleagues to their seders in this effort to "directly address biased attitudes and general ignorance–the seed of all antisemitism." More information about this initiative will be available in the coming months.

We must also be proactive to ensure we have the resources to safeguard our community members and visitors. In order to augment the excellent work being done by individual congregations and organizations, in the last few months, the Community Security Committee (CSC), chaired by Dave Nelson and comprised of representatives from our communal organizations, congregations and Federation staff have been working to advance community preparedness.

In November, community-wide threat assessments were conducted by the Secure Community Network (SCN), the national homeland security initiative of The Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. These assessments will provide important recommendations regarding facility upgrades and community crisis and communication protocols. This information will be essential for applying for future Homeland Security grants.

Preparedness training opportunities are being explored and will be offered to the community in the coming months. A "Stop the Bleed" (trauma first aid) training will take place Tuesday, February 4, 9-10:30a.m. at the JCC and is open to the public.

All of these activities, which were prioritized by the CSC this fall, have been funded by generous contributions to the Community Security Campaign. To date, over $67,000 has been raised toward the goal of $100,000 to securing and preparing our community. The Community Security Committee is convening a task force to develop allocations guidelines and processes for distributing security campaign funds where they are needed most, based on the assessments from SCN.

At the beginning of this new decade, we resolve to continue to bring light into the world by connecting with one another, sharing our simchas (joyous times), and supporting each other in times of need. We will deepen our relationships with the broader community in which we live and foster understanding and connection across faith, ethnic, racial, political, and economic divides. We will continue to work together with our communal partners to be a prepared, safe, and welcoming community for all. We invite you to be our partner in these efforts and welcome your involvement.

To learn more about and participate in the rich variety of programs and services offered by Federation and all our local Jewish communal organizations or to make a pledge to the Community Security Campaign, visit www.jewishannarbor.org. ■

Chai Mitzvah celebrates 1 year!

Marci Sukenic, special to the WJN

Chai Mitzvah is celebrating one year since it was brought to Washtenaw County by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. Over the course of the year, the community has been buzzing

Participants, Rachel Portnoy and Katie Chosid, volunteer at Alpha House

as participants come together for community building, mitzvah projects, meaningful discussion, and engagement. Small cohorts, ranging from young adults to seniors, are getting together to socialize and engage. Monthly themes–along with Chai Mitzvah prepared source books–guide the discussions, and groups are creating a warm community and heating up their Jewish life as they participate. The newest Chai Mitzvah group is a group at Beth Israel Congregation, specifically to bring together the empty-nester and senior community.

Chai Mitzvah's theme for November was Tzedekah and Philanthropy. The groups all participated in different discussions and many participants were involved in group mitzvah projects such as volunteering at the Alpha House, participating in a Jewish Family Service coat drive, exploring meaningful projects for the holidays season, and supporting Mott Children's Hospital through the One Candle Chanukah event. As the community begins another year of engagement, the Chai Mitzvah themes include relevant and interesting topics such as Interpersonal Relationships and Mindfulness/Conscious Living. The possibilities are limitless and each group and participant has the flexibility to discover what is meaningful to themselves both individually and as a cohort.

New Chai Mitzvah groups are forming in 2020 and there is a place for everyone. Interested? Questions? Contact Marci Sukenic (marci@jewishannarbor.org or 734-677-0100, ext. 226). ■

JYP partners with organizations across community

Jessica Weil, special to the WJN

In the last few months, Jewish Young Professionals has been busy, partnering on Shabbat programs with Jewish organizations in Ann Arbor and Detroit, including Michigan Hillel, Beth Israel Congregation, and Repair the World Detroit. JYP also participated in the community Mega Challah Bake coordinated by Ann Arbor Chabad House. JYP's involvement with other Jewish organizations connects young adults with exciting learning opportunities and experiences.

Jewish Young Professionals participated in the Mega Challah Bake with other women from across the greater Ann Arbor community.

Shabbat team member Rachael Dawson-Baglien shares "In addition to the monthly Shabbats, I've really been enjoying the opportunity to get together with JYP and different organizations in the community, whether it's kneading challah together at the Mega Challah Bake or competing to see who can create the most bags for Repair the World's food program!"

All upcoming programs can be found by visiting www.facebook.com/jypa2. JYP is a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. To learn more, contact Jessica Weil at Jessica@jewishannarbor.org. ■

Women's Philanthropy series on food and the environment

Stephanie Glass, special to the WJN

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's Women's Philanthropy Committee will be hosting two engaging and timely events on food and the environment. On Thursday, February 6 at 7 p.m. there will be a Wine and Cheese tasting at York in which participants will have the chance to learn more about different wine pairings and how Federation supports food rescue in Israel. Marci Sukenic, a Women's Philanthropy Committee member shared "we hope this event provides women in our community with a way to connect in a fun environment while also getting the chance to learn more about local food and Federation!" Registration for this event is now open at www.jewishannarbor.org/wine&cheese20.

On Thursday, March 19 at 7 p.m. the committee will host an immersive event on Judaism and the environment. Representatives from Hazon and Ann Arbor Recycling and Compost will be on site to share more about their organizations and ways individuals can be more environmentally friendly through simple actions. Judy Freedman of Women's Philanthropy and Amanda Glucklich, Director of Engagement and Programs at Beth Israel, will also be sharing their experience with creating a more environmentally conscious home and agro-Judaism. As a co-planner of the event, Amanda Glucklich is excited about what this event will offer our community. "Attendees will learn in depth about how to compost year-round successfully in Ann Arbor and will come away with the knowledge of Jewish values that will inform choices we make in regards to our environment. Participants will also hear about on-going initiatives in Ann Arbor and Detroit that raise awareness about how we can be more eco-conscious both in our Jewish communal spaces and home." Registration for this event is now open at www.jewishannarbor.org/ecoJudaism20.

For more information about these events or Women's Philanthropy, please contact Sharyn J. Gallatin, Chief Development Officer at sharyn@jewishannarbo.org or 734-773-3533. ■

Teen travel to Israel: Let the Federation help you get there!

Stephanie Glass, special to the WJN

By visiting Israel on a gap year, semester, or summer trip, youth in our community are able to foster a connection with Israeli culture, experience Jewish life outside of the diaspora, and make memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. To help make participation in these trips possible, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor offers two opportunities for financial assistance: The Federation funded travel subsidy program and the Susan L. Lichter Memorial Endowed Israel Scholarship fund. These opportunities are open to Washtenaw County high school students and those participating in gap year programs between high school and college. Funding is available for programs that are a minimum of 21 days of length and are organized by an approved provider.

Israel Teen Travel Subsidies are made possible through an allocation from the Federation's Annual Community Campaign. Recipients may receive a grant of up to $1,000 based on the number of requests received by the preferred applicant date of March 2, 2020. The Susan L. Lichter Memorial Endowed Israel Scholarship, founded in 2009, is generously funded by Dr. Paul and Carolyn Lichter in memory of their daughter, Susan L. Lichter. Ms. Lichter had a deep connection to Israel and through this scholarship, the Lichters are able to help other teens develop a relationship with Israel and our worldwide Jewish community. This scholarship awards two $2,500 stipends for Israel travel. Scholarship applications are due by March 2, 2020.

Ryan Lechtner, a previous awardee of the Susan L. Lichter Scholarship, shared participating on a summer trip in Israel was "a once in a lifetime experience I will never forget. I was surrounded by new and old friends and made memories I will never forget. Whether it was getting up at 4 am to climb Masada or walking across all of Israel in four days, I can safely say this was the best summer of my life!"

The application for both the Israel Travel Subsidy and the Susan L. Lichter Scholarship is now available on the Federation's website (www.jewishannarbor.org/israel/israel-trip-scholarships). For more information, please contact Stephanie Glass, Development and Planning Associate, at stephanie@jewishannarbor.org or 734-773-3534. ■

Federation welcomes Margaret Schreiber to coordinate LIFE & LEGACY

Eileen Freed, special to the WJN

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is delighted to welcome Margaret Schreiber to the team as its LIFE & LEGACY Coordinator. Margaret will work closely with Federation Chief Development Officer Sharyn Gallatin in shepherding this important communal project.

After practicing as an attorney for several years, Margaret established and operated a legal staffing service in Chicago for 12 years. Her strong entrepreneurial, organizational and interpersonal skills are a great match for her vital role in building this new initiative.

Margaret's strong commitment and connection to the Jewish community is another quality that led her to join the Federation team. She was born and raised in Madison, Wisconsin, and her family was actively involved as leaders in the Madison Jewish community. Margaret has continued her involvement in Jewish communal life in Chicago, Bexley, Ohio and since arriving in Ann Arbor in 2015. She is married to David Sitz, and they have a teenage daughter Julia. A fun fact about Margaret is that Elie Wiesel z"l was her professor at Boston University!

"I am thrilled to have Margaret join the LIFE & LEGACY team," says Gallatin, who recruited Margaret to the team. "She will be instrumental in the implementation of a program which will ensure the future sustainability of our community."

LIFE & LEGACY provides matching funds, training and support to help integrate legacy giving into the philanthropic culture of the community in order to maintain strong and vibrant Jewish communal organizations and institutions long into the future. Eleven local organizations committed to the LIFE & LEGACY program after participating in an introductory program, "Why Legacy? Why Now?" on December 11, 2019. The first hands-on workshop for LIFE & LEGACY teams led by national director Arlene Schiff took place January 9.

Since its inception seven years ago, LIFE & LEGACY has generated 17,627 legacy commitments with an estimated value of $672 million in future gifts from 558 partnering organizations.

For more information about LIFE & LEGACY, contact Margaret at margaret@jewishannarbor.org or 734-677-0100, ext 238. ■

Four Months In Israel

By Eva Zaientz

Standing in Israel, praying at the Western Wall (the Kotel), I felt a feeling I had never experienced before, a feeling of acceptance and belonging. Lines of women filled the small space, all trying to make their way to touch the 2,000 year-old wall. Everyone was there for the same reason, to feel what it's like to pray at the holiest place in Judaism. I felt the warmth and joy overcome me, a sense of unity was surrounding me that Spring morning. I was connected to Judaism and to the world in a way I had never felt before. This emotion only grew stronger as I lived and studied in Israel for the next four months.

From January to May 2019, I attended the Union for Reform Judaism's Heller High (formerly NFTY-EIE), in Kibbutz Tzuba, Israel. Kibbutz Tzuba is in the Judean Hills, about 15 minutes outside of Jerusalem. From Tzuba you could look out over an entire valley which included both Jewish and Arab villages. It was sunny, bright, and welcoming. The kibbutz very quickly became my second home. The culture of Tzuba really spoke to me. It was warm and family-oriented. I ate meals and celebrated holidays with the kibbutz families, shopped at the kibbutz store, and played with kibbutz dogs that were always running around.

Heller High is a high school program for international Jewish students. I was able to take all my usual high school classes, and also took immersive Hebrew and Jewish studies, history, and geography. The semester I attended, I was there with 35 students from American and Canadian high schools. The Jewish History class was immersive. We had day and overnight field trips all over Israel. In addition to learning from texts and lectures, we learned at the actual historical sites. For example, we traveled to Tzfat (Safed) and learned about Jewish mysticism in the city where Kabbalah was developed. Tzfat is a beautiful city that sits up in the hills in the north, with very narrow streets lined with 500 year-old synagogues. These synagogues were home to some of the most famous rabbis in Jewish history, such as Rabbi Isaac Luria. I was able to learn about Kabbalah in Rabbi Luria's ancient synagogue.

While Heller High kept us really busy, we still had time to explore on our own. I was able to spend time with my friends exploring Jerusalem, which was only a few miles from Tzuba. Spending time in Jerusalem gave me a chance to get to know Israeli culture and to practice my Hebrew. One of my favorite routines was ordering lamb shawarma with hummus at Moshiko Falafel on Ben Yehuda Street. I did it almost every week.

Being in Jerusalem also helped me shape my worldview. Being there for four months really helped me to see the world without the center-point being America. I learned how Israel's political system works through experiencing their national election. Israel's multi-party system and the issues the country faces are very different than what we experience in the United States. Israel, unlike the United States, does not have an agreed upon border. Learning about the dynamic between political groups within Israel and surrounding countries and how they deal with these border tensions made me realize that every country has its own politics, goals, strengths, and weaknesses.

Spending four months in Israel at Heller High was a life-changing experience. It inspired me to continue my education in world politics and Judaism by studying International Relations and Jewish Studies this fall in college. I would not have been able to have this experience without the amazing support of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, the Susan L. Lichter Memorial Endowed Israel Scholarship, Rabbi Whinston and Cantor Hayut of Temple Beth Emeth, as well as the support of my family. I will never forget my time in Israel. I will forever have a home there. ■

Opinion: Why I went to Iowa with JVP

by Miriam Saperstein
The writer is a junior at the University of Michigan. They are majoring in Judaic studies.

Last December, Donald Trump addressed a roomful of Jewish people taunting them that they would vote for him because they wanted to protect their money. Within the week, he signed an executive order attacking the free speech rights of activists criticizing the Israeli government. He claimed this was in the name of fighting antisemitism, the very antisemitism that he himself perpetuates with his disturbing comments. This executive order is designed to punish students for questioning, critiquing, and working towards a world in which everyone is free.

Jewish Voice for Peace Action activists on the "Palestine Freedom 2020" bus in Iowa, January 7, 2019. (Courtesy of Jewish Voice for Peace Action)

Trump is one of many antisemitic politicians who hide behind their support of the Israeli military while stoking the flames of antisemitism in their words and policies. These politicians will often do something antisemitic then immediately justify their bigotry by demonstrating their support for military injustices against Palestinians, as if the oppression of one group can elevate another.

Following the executive order, I wanted to do something. I wasn't going to be silenced by this scare-tactic. I was mad that Jews and non-Jews alike were being punished for asking hard questions that disentangle being Jewish from unconditionally supporting the Israeli military. I had a feeling that this was an important moment to act.

So, I went to Iowa, a place the entire country is focused on ahead of the Democratic caucuses. I wasn't alone. Fourteen other young people from around the United States joined me with Jewish Voice for Peace Action for a week of bringing a simple message to Democratic presidential candidates: It's not that complicated. Palestinians deserve freedom and justice just like everyone else. Candidates need to commit to ending U.S. military funding for Israeli injustices. Palestinians should be free.

Together, we engaged with voters over hot chocolate, put the pressure on candidates, and celebrated Shabbat. Many of the voters had questions. A lot of people asked what the United States military funding paid for, a list that includes the detention and torture of children, walls restricting freedom of movement, and the development of military technology that is sold all over the world, including to surveil migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border. Together, we asked, what else could that money be used for? Educating children? Health care? Rebuilding homes demolished by the Israeli military?

I'm returning to campus at the University of Michigan for the winter semester feeling held by a beautiful community of friends and fellow activists, across Iowa, and beyond. The stakes are high. People's lives are in danger—medics, journalists, children, everyday Palestinians—so I will continue to exercise my right to free speech to advocate alongside Palestinians, despite white nationalists' scare tactics. I deserve to ask questions about where my tax dollars are spent. We all deserve a world in which everyone has access to clean water, education, and health care. And Palestinians deserve freedom, just like everybody else. ■

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Naomi Chazan on Israeli democracy

Beth Dwoskin and Judy Musket, special to the WJN

In November, 2019 the New Israel Fund brought Israeli political scientist and former member of Knesset Naomi Chazan to Ann Arbor. The public event was held at Beth Israel Congregation. Speaking just after the U.S. State Department announced that the West Bank settlements did not violate international law and the Israeli Attorney General charged Netanyahu with fraud, bribery, and breach of trust, Chazan still managed to carry a message of realism and hope.

Naomi Chazan, born and raised in Israel, has had a career as an honored academic and a lifetime of service to the state of Israel, which give her a profound understanding of Israel's political landscape. She was a member of the Knesset on the Meretz list and was director of the New Israel Fund from 2008 to 2012. She works tirelessly for women's rights, peace, and justice.

Chazan spoke about democratic erosion in the state of Israel. She described a slide from true liberal democracy to what she called formal, procedural democracy, where the voice of the people becomes increasingly muted. This slide has been happening in eastern and central Europe in recent years, as well as in Israel. With this "democratic recession" happening everywhere, the world is at a low and dangerous point. Chazan explained that this process happens legitimately–people aren't alarmed until it's too late. This process, she explained, has three components:

1. Anti-liberalism—the pernicious chipping away at individual and minority rights. There is a silencing of dissent and attacks on freedom of speech. This is occurring in Israel, especially, in regard to the territories. Laws against boycotts have been passed. People who call for boycotts are being blocked from entering Israel. This process of anti-liberalism has culminated in the Nation State bill.

2. Dismantling checks and balances, the media, and the independence of the justice system. Such creeping neo-authoritarianism leads to centralization and personalization of power. The process is so esoteric that it's hard for people to get excited about it.

3. Populism–the democratic norms that have been understood as forbearance are unraveling. There are behaviors that in the past were just "not done." Previously in Israel, the desire to build a just society was a norm. Now, charismatic leaders play on fear, distrust, and anger to tinker with the norm of equal justice for all. Netanyahu and others have labelled everyone from Arabs to Benny Gantz as traitors, something that was just "not done" in the past.

Chazan called for "democratic rehabilitation" in Israel. She wants to see Netanyahu removed from office through elections, and she wants to see a new, value-driven vision for Israel that recognizes that democracy cannot coexist with occupation.

Chazan took several questions from the audience. When asked about the power of religious parties in Israel, she stated that she doesn't blame them for pursuing their goal of a *halakhic* state. Rather, she is angry at the parties who make bargains with them to maintain power.

Even though Chazan stated at the outset of her speech that she didn't believe in drawing parallels between countries, people asked her about the political situation in the United States. She said that America is better off because the ideal of a just society is foundational in America, enshrined in our constitution. Israel has no constitution. In Israel, the desire to build a just society is historic.

In addition, young people in America are more likely to be liberal. She quipped, "Every day another progressive in Israel dies of old age." In truth, she said that while youth as a whole are more conservative in Israel, opinions break down along ethnic and educational lines.

Chazan sees hope in recent elections in Europe and elsewhere, and in polls showing that 60-70% of Israelis think that Netanyahu should resign. Even as she spoke, she was checking her phone for the latest polls. She said that for her, being Jewish in America is about caring for the other. She also feels that in spite of all our familial squabbles, for American and Israeli Jews, the future is intertwined.

Naomi Chazan's talk was co-sponsored by Temple Beth Emeth, Beth Israel Congregation, the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation, the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation, the Jewish Cultural Society, and the Jewish Communal Leadership Program at U of M. ■

Benji Lovitt explains what's so funny about Israel

Clara Silver, Special to the WJN

On Sunday, February 23 4 to 5:30 p.m., Benji Lovitt performs *What's So Funny About Israel?,* an interactive presentation about the differences in the way Israelis and Americans see each other. Lovitt, a comedian, comedy historian, educator, and writer, uses humor and laughter to narrow the gap in understanding between Israelis and Americans, as well as combat stereotypes and misconceptions. His presentation in Ann Arbor will be a custom experience combining other presentations that he has given around the world which focus on the history of the Middle East through its comedy and the cultural differences in perception that come from the different sensibilities of the Middle East versus the West via pop culture character, Larry David from *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.

Benji Lovvit

What's So Funny About Israel? is a co-sponsored event by the Israel Center at the J, a program of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor which provides opportunities for individuals to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with Israel as a community; Beth Israel Congregation, where the presentation will take place; and the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. As these organizations discussed aspects of Israel that would be meaningful to explore, Beth Israel Engagement and Program Director, Amanda Glucklich notes that, "humor came to mind because Benji, Eileen [Freed, Executive Director of Federation], and I are connected through Young Judaea. Clara [Silver, of the Ann Arbor JCC] and I agreed that "Israel" and "funny" aren't usually words you hear in the same sentence, however, laughing at cultural differences brings people together, and humor allows people with opposing viewpoints to relate to each other."

Lovitt was born in the United States and made *aliyah* in 2006. Since then he has curated his experience as a new immigrant acclimating and assimilating into Israeli culture into bold and humorous observations about both American and Israeli cultures. These observations inform his standup comedy performances as well as his writing and workshop facilitation. His educational programming is not only about humor and cultural differences, but helps participants explore the human need to face real threats and contentious issues by finding the humor in them.

What's So Funny About Israel? is open to the community and presented free of charge via generous support from the D. Dan and Betty Kahn Foundation through a grant supporting the work of the Israel Center at the J. For more information on this program, visit jccannarbor.org. ■

JCC Hosts Party and Events Showcase

Clara Silver, special to the WJN

On Sunday, March 15 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor is once again hosting the "Ann Arbor Party & Event Showcase," an expo featuring regional vendors who provide services for celebrations large and small, such as weddings, bnai mitzvah, and graduations, among other occasions.

The Showcase is presented in partnership with event production expert, Staci Kennedy, founder and operator of Who's Got The Time event planning, and décor/design specialist, Yael Zoldan, owner-operator of Designs that Matter custom party design studio. Kennedy and Zoldan are both based in Ann Arbor, and their extensive experience and professional relationships with area service providers allows them to curate a best-of-the-best event for Showcase attendees.

Ann Arbor Party & Event Showcase

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet local vendors and explore options for upcoming milestone events. Kennedy notes that, "Yael and I love hosting this community-wide Showcase at the JCC. Planning an event like a wedding or Bar or Bat Mitzvah can feel really overwhelming. This is the perfect way to meet and get to know some of our favorite vendors who always do a fantastic job for their clients. The lounges at the JCC, where this event will be held, are intimate spaces, conducive to asking questions and really getting to know the different vendors."

According to Zoldan, "If you're looking to connect with DJs, photographers, florists, invitation designers, and event planners, the Ann Arbor Party & Event Showcase is the place you want to check out. It is designed to be one-stop shopping for all your event needs." Vendors from previous years have offered taste tests and examples of custom party favors, one-of-a-kind custom invitations and décor, and party activities and custom favors that range from the classic photo booth to the unique custom air-brushed while-you-wait apparel.

The Ann Arbor Party & Event Showcase is free of charge to attendees and open to the public. Registration is requested to help vendors prepare by visiting jccannarbor.org. For more information on attending or to participate as a vendor contact Staci Kennedy, staci@whosgotthetime.com or Yael Zoldan, yael@designs-that-matter.com. For information on reserving spaces at the Ann Arbor JCC for celebrations or other events, contact Clara Silver, director of operations, clarasilver@jccannarbor.org or (734) 971-0990. ■

Third Thursday ahead of the curve and more

Clara Silver, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor hosted Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County's Project Coordinator, Rachael Dawson-Baglien, at its Third Thursday lunch-and-learn program on January 16, where Dawson-Baglien introduced attendees to "Ahead of the Curve," a new innovative web-based program that aims to make Washtenaw County a more caregiver-friendly community. The goal is to help traditional caregivers and community members identify at-risk, isolated older adults, and link them to existing community resources before a crisis occurs.

Rachael Dawson-Baglien

Dawson-Baglien explained that "Ahead of the Curve," consists of a searchable online "Senior Resource Directory" website, listing more than 300 county-wide resources for older adults. In addition there is an online quiz to help older residents and their caregivers get connected with resources, as well as a blog that covers a range of topics written by interesting older adults in Washtenaw County and interviews with local agencies that serve seniors. Her presentation included visuals of the online resources, which will include methods to identify and report elder abuse.

According to Dawson-Baglien, "This initiative is unique because it engages everyone. Ahead of the Curve connects people who care for or know seniors with the resources to help them. Older adults can also take a hands-on approach by completing the online self-assessment, which selects resources specific to their responses." Ahead of the Curve is supported by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund (Healthy Aging), which works to improve the health and wellness of Michigan residents and reduce the cost of healthcare, with a special focus on children and seniors. Information about the Health Fund can be found at mihealthfund.org.

The Ann Arbor JCC serves as an important connector between older adults and new programs in the community like "Ahead of the Curve." For more information on this program and the role everyone has in building a more aging-friendly community, visit getaheadwashtenaw.org.

This month's presentation will be held on February 20 and will feature singer/songwriter, Robin Beck, performing a program of love songs. Beck's performances are interlaced with interesting trivia about the composers of the music she performs, as well as stories about what made those songs famous.

Third Thursday presentations are free and open to the public and always run noon to 1 p.m. Lunch is available through the WISE at the J's lunch café program for a small charge for those under 60, with a suggested donation for those 60 and over. For more information on upcoming Third Thursday presentations, contact Noemi Herzig, Director of Jewish Cultural Arts and Education, at noemiherzig@jccannarbor.org or by calling (734) 971-0990. Lunch reservations are required and can be made by calling (734) 971-0990 or visiting jccannarbor.org ■

The minds behind The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel on how they aim to represent Jews on screen

Emily Burack

NEW YORK (JTA)—*The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* didn't add to its large collection of awards at the Golden Globes this year. But the third season of the celebrated series, now streaming on Amazon Prime, is keeping audiences hooked as it expands the world of Midge Maisel.

It also comes at a time of increasing awareness and discussion about how minorities — especially Jews, during this period of rising antisemitism across the U.S. — are portrayed on screen. As one of the most Jewish series currently on television, *Mrs. Maisel* is involved in a lot of these discussions.

"I think what *Mrs. Maisel* does is to draw on the stereotypes while constantly undermining them [by] showing you the complexity of her character," a professor said to the Los Angeles Times recently.

Amy Sherman-Palladino and Dan Palladino, the married couple behind the show — Sherman-Palladino the creator (who alone has won four Emmys for the series) and her husband, a co-producer and co-writer — spoke on the topic with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency recently, in what was likely their most Jewish interview to date.

JTA: How do you go about making sure the Jewish community feels represented authentically on "Maisel"?

Sherman-Palladino: I've always viewed comedy, especially at this time, as a Jewish creation — like the rhythm, the cadence. As a kid, I had the *2,000-year-old man* and Mel Brooks and Carl Reiner on a loop. That's my rhythms and my father's rhythms. And so, it didn't even occur to me to make [Midge] anything other than a Jewish girl from the Upper West Side. It didn't even occur to me to make her anything other than that.

[The Maisels and the Weissmans] are two Jewish success stories in New York, at a time when the world was wide open for them… We just leaned right into it.

It's such a fundamentally New York Jewish story, but in season three, her world really expands.

Sherman-Palladino: We always have a foot in New York. We will never be a show that will be gone from New York. It's a New York show, first and foremost. Wherever she goes and travels, her home is New York. It's just something that now, hopefully, is ingrained in the show; you can't separate [New York] from what the show is.

When you started, when you pitched the show, did you know it was going to end up where it is now? Did you have a plan that she's going to go on tour, and all that?

Sherman-Palladino: We had the touchstones for the first three seasons.

Dan Palladino: She's following a certain path. While she's had a setback or two of different sizes, she still is going forward — even when she goes backwards. She's going to brush herself off and figure out a way to move forward again. So it's a little bit two steps forward, a step back —

Sherman-Palladino: Like any career in show business.

Palladino: We try not to set things in stone too much because we have to be open to how the actors are working together and what the dynamics are. When we first started, I don't know if we really knew how much we were going to spend with Susie and Midge, just the two of them. But, from the very beginning, these two actresses [Alex Borstein and Rachel Brosnahan] — with their very different backgrounds and acting styles — came together and just really gelled together. So, you pick up that we should

Alex Borstein, left, and Rachel Brosnahan in season three. (Amazon Prime)

write more scenes for them.

Some of the discussion around the show now centers on the depiction of Jewish stereotypes. How do you deal with that issue in our hyper-aware culture?

Palladino: We knew that if we show a Jewish family at temple — if we show them and talk about Yom Kippur and all those kinds of things — there are going to be people who are going to nitpick at specifics that maybe we didn't get exactly right. But we do it all lovingly. A lot of television shows will say "here's a Jewish family" and you'll never see them doing anything specifically Jewish.

Sherman-Palladino: They talk about Hanukkah once in a while.

Palladino: Yeah, every once in a while, there will be a mention of Hanukkah, or a Yiddish word spoken. And other than that, they're Episcopalian! So we're trying to lean heavily into Jewish practices. We just want to show it, celebrate it, and sometimes laugh about it.

I'm not Jewish, but I married a Jewish woman and I've been working with — and have been friends with — Jews all my adult life. I have learned to love the laughter and the joy surrounding the traditions. We don't hang on the internet a lot because it's —

Sherman-Palladino: No, we are not on any social media, because we will die.

Palladino: But a lot of the feedback that we've gotten, has been "Thank you. Thank you for leaning into it and showing Jews being Jewish, as opposed to just name checking them as Jewish."

Sherman-Palladino: And there are many different kinds of Jews! To say, "oh, Jewish stereotypes," well, what are you talking about? Because we have an educated Jew, we have a woman who was happy to be a mother, we have another woman striking out as a stand-up comic, and, you know, Susie Myerson's a Jew! We've got a broad range of Jews in there.

Like I said, a lot of this is based on my family, or people that I know. I think that anytime you lean into anything, somebody is going to say, "Oh, you're leaning into the Jewish stereotype." Or if [we showed] a Chinese family, it'd be like, "Oh, you're leaning into the Chinese stereotype." I don't think you can avoid that — except for doing what a lot of shows did for many years, which is like, "We're Jewish, but we won't talk about it, or you won't see anything about it," just one girl will have dark curly hair.

Again, it's a comedy. Jews own this cadence. They made it… Listen to Lenny Bruce, what he talks about. In between all this other stuff, he talks about his mother; he has a whole bit about his mother and he had a tattoo and she says "you can't be buried in a Jewish cemetery." And you could say, well, that's all stereotypical Jews, but no, that's Jews. Those are Jewish mothers. That's how they are. You can't please everybody. You just can't. We try to please most of the people, if possible.

[The Jews have] such an amazing story. It's the story of people who have been ostracized and kicked out and chased from country to country to country and have lived through one of the most horrific, devastating tragedies of all time, and yet, they're the ones with the jokes. They are the ones who come through with the humor. We should just own that because it's survival. Comedy and humor and jokes are survival. And if anything, the Jews know how to survive.

How do you decide what Jewish places and moments to include in the show?

Sherman-Palladino: We don't set out going, "Okay, this year, we're going to show a bar mitzvah." But you know, they've got children, things come along with that, and you have to follow the traditions and family. It's all based on life. The reason we [went] to the Catskills is because bringing back parts of vanishing New York is part of our fun. It felt like a cultural moment in time that's gone. That's what we wanted to bring back.

That's why the garment district was so important to show because it was a thriving, bustling [part of Jewish life]. And it was a way for someone like Moishe, who probably didn't have a lot of education, [and] was just a tough, self-made guy, to build a whole company for himself. It was a place where that was possible.

While Midge's story is fictional, it's set in a very real world. And of course, Lenny Bruce is a very real person —

Palladino: He's based on Lenny Bruce!

Why did you decide to include Lenny as the reality anchor?

Palladino: Talk to any comic today, and everyone will acknowledge that he's the godfather of today's comedy. He died for other people's sins. Not that he didn't sin but he was —

Sherman-Palladino: Not that he didn't have a little hand in it.

Palladino: He was a guy trying to point the way to a new way to communicate with an audience. He wasn't a guy just desperately trying to shock people. He was trying to start a conversation and trying to deal with topics that were, at the time very, very taboo. There's some of them that are still a little taboo. But he certainly changed the way that a lot of the comedians that everybody loves today are able to speak. And, quite frankly, the language we use on the show may have been generated from Lenny Bruce trying to open doors. If he overstepped the bounds, then that's what a maverick does: they overstep the bounds and then they often pay the price.

He wasn't intended to be a big part of the show. He was maybe just going to be in the pilot, if the character didn't work. But Luke Kirby came in — he's tall, he's handsome, all you girls love him. We guys like him too, he's a cool guy.

I feel like his death is in the back of my mind as I watch, but I don't know if that's intentional or not.

Sherman-Palladino: It always will be. I mean, the minute you put Lenny Bruce, you can't [not think of his death]. And I don't think that's a bad thing. Especially not for her, who's trying to navigate which way is right.

This conversation has been edited and condensed for length and clarity. ■

National Jewish Book Award 2019 winners

Marcy Oster

(JTA) – A book tracing the history of Jewish women in America won the Jewish Book Council's top national award.

America's Jewish Women: A History from Colonial Times to Today, by Pamela Nadell, was recognized with the Jewish Book of the Year Everett Family Foundation Award. Her book breaks down the path of American Jewish women from colonial Jewesses to 19th-century domestic mothers, turn-of-the-century immigrants, mid-20th century semi-assimilationists and to today.

The council announced the winners of the 2019 National Jewish Book Awards, the 69th edition, on January 16.

Robert Alter received a Lifetime Achievement Award for his decades-long project *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*.

Two books on antisemitism received top honors. Deborah Lipstadt's *Anti-Semitism: Here and Now* was recognized with the Jewish Education and Identity Award in Memory of Dorothy Kripke, and Bari Weiss' *How to Fight Anti-Semitism* was named in the Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice in Memory of Myra H. Kraft category.

Jewish Cuisine in Hungary: A Cultural History with 83 Authentic Recipes, by András Koerner, which the council calls a comprehensive and unique contribution to the field, received top honors in a new category, the Jane and Stuart Weitzman Family Award for Food Writing and Cookbooks.

Winners in the fiction categories include *Fly Already: Stories*, by Etgar Keret for the JJ Greenberg Memorial Award for Fiction; *The World That We Knew*, by Alice Hoffman, for The Miller Family Book Club Award in Memory of Helen Dunn Weinstein and June Keit Miller; and *Naamah*, by Sarah Blake, for the Goldberg Prize for Debut Fiction.

Other categories included biography, Holocaust literature and children's literature. See the complete list of award recipients on the Jewish Book Council's website.

The winners will be honored March 17 at a dinner and ceremony in New York City hosted by Jeffrey Yoskowitz, author of *The Gefilte Manifesto*. ■

Trust Exercise author Susan Choi on not exploring her Jewish background in her writing

Josefin Dolsten

NEW YORK (JTA) — On the day she found out she was being considered for the National Book Awards, Susan Choi was swimming laps at her gym, trying to busy herself.

"Early in my career I just learned to close my ears to awards season," she said. "I think it's distracting and really stressful."

When Choi emerged from the water, she found her phone flooded with emoji-filled congratulatory text messages. Her novel *Trust Exercise* had made the first cut.

In October, she was named a finalist and last month she took home the prestigious award.

The Brooklyn-based author's coming-of-age novel follows a group of students at a suburban performing arts school in the early 1980s. Two students there navigate the fallout of an intense relationship. The novel tells its story, which deals with issues of consent and sexual assault, from multiple perspectives that at times leaves the reader unsure of what actually transpired.

Choi, whose father is Korean and mother is Jewish, started working on *Trust Exercise* about five or six years ago, but it came further into focus with the explosion of the #MeToo movement. In a first for the author, current events influenced her to the extent that she decided to tweak the ending of the novel before its publication earlier this year.

"I kept saying to my agent, 'I just don't think the ending is what I want it to be,'" she told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in a phone interview Thursday.

As dozens of allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein came out in the fall of 2017 and then against other prominent men, Choi said she was especially influenced by conversations on the topic with other women.

Choi, 50, is no stranger to critical acclaim.

Her novel *American Women*, which was based on the 1974 kidnapping of heiress Patty Hearst by a left-wing terrorist organization, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for fiction and was turned into a film that premiered earlier this year. She has won a number of awards, including the Asian American Literary Award, the PEN Emerging Writers Awards and the Lambda Literary Award, and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

She grew up in South Bend, Indiana, the daughter of a Korean immigrant father and an American-born Jewish mother whose parents had emigrated from Eastern Europe. There she saw no families that looked like hers — in fact, Choi says there were no other Jewish or Asian people in her neighborhood.

"My mother and father equally stuck out like sore thumbs," she said.

Things changed when she was 9 and her parents divorced. Choi moved with her mother to Houston, settling into a heavily Jewish neighborhood where many of her mother's relatives lived. There Choi fit in as a Jewish person but not as partly Asian.

"Suddenly I was much more of the anomaly," she recalled.

A reader might surmise that it is with her Asian identity that she feels more comfortable — given its appearance in her work compared to her Jewish roots.

Choi's first novel, *The Foreign Student*, which is inspired by her father's immigrant experience, tells the story of a young man who moves to the United States after being traumatized by the Korean War. It won the 1999 Asian American Literary Award for fiction. And for six years, she has been working intermittently on a project inspired by her paternal grandfather, Choe Chaeso, a prominent Korean intellectual, and how he portrayed Japan in his writings during its occupation of Korea.

But Choi says it's with her Jewish identity that she feels the most at home.

"I'm like a latke-and-menorah Jew," she said. "I didn't even have a bat mitzvah. My mom was just not up for it, which was fine, but culturally I feel much more comfortable in a Jewish context than I do in an Asian context."

Though she was the only partly Asian person in her Houston Jewish community, she was exposed to a different type of diversity.

"I grew up in a large extended family of Jews who were vegetarians and atheists and left-wing and middle-of-the-road and more observant and less observant, and so I guess I internalized that there were so many ways to be Jewish, and I've never felt inadequate or worried about my Jewish identity," she said.

Choi never had a similar experience that related to her Korean roots.

"My Asian identity is much more tentative, and I think about it more and I feel less secure there because I always feel like I don't understand or I don't know enough about it," the author said.

"I don't speak a word of Hebrew because I went to Hebrew school four times and then I didn't wanna ever go back, and my mom was like 'Whatever' — but it doesn't make me feel bad about myself," she continued. "But the fact that I don't speak Korean makes me quite insecure. I do think it has to do with upbringing, and just growing up in a very diverse Jewish environment where there was that space to just be Jewish however you happen to be Jewish."

Still, Choi has yet to explore her Jewish identity in her writing.

"It's something that I've thought about for years mostly because I find my mom's family's stories so interesting," she said. "But part of what has made me not go in that direction with my writing is there's so much amazing literature about Jewish identity and Jewish experience, and I've never yet felt like I have something I can really add to this."

But she doesn't rule out writing about it.

"I think there are also possibly future projects for me that are going to draw on my family's history — other aspects of it that I haven't really explored — but I don't know what those projects will be," she said.

For now, however, Choi has her hands full. She is in the process of adapting *Trust Exercise* into a screenplay for a miniseries. She is also figuring out if she is ready to return to the project about her paternal grandfather — from which she took a break to write *Trust Exercise* — or whether it still needs more time to stew.

She is also raising her two sons, aged 12 and 15, from her marriage to *New York Times* restaurant critic Pete Wells, from whom she is now separated.

That's all in addition to teaching classes at Yale University, where she is on the English faculty, and trying to find time to go swimming, hiking and kayaking. Oh, and prepare for Hanukkah.

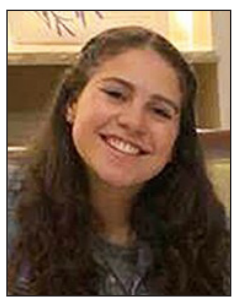
"I bought Hanukkah candles this year on time, so I won't be scouring the [store]," she said. "I actually have them in the house already because often it's the case that I'm like, 'Oh my God, it's Hanukkah and I have no candles." ■

At 17, I'm the youngest woman to complete the seven-plus year study of the Talmud

By Hila Schlakman

EFRAT, West Bank (JTA)—I didn't start learning the Talmud to take a stand or voice an opinion. When I started learning a page of Talmud per day (Daf Yomi) at age 10, I didn't realize that anyone would even notice. To me, it was just something I did, a part of my day that was dedicated to learning Torah with my brother and father.

At ages 9 and 10 respectively, my brother and I had no idea what the commitment really meant. I knew that our being so young was pretty unusual. When my older brother had finished the Daf Yomi cycle at 17-years-old, it was considered a big deal. But other than that, studying Talmud daily seemed very normal to me. I wasn't even aware that the fact that I am a girl was a factor to consider.



The Daf Yomi has been a part of my home for as long as I can remember. My father and my older brother, Ari, first finished Shas (the 2,711 page Babylonian Talmud) in 2012. They had started learning Talmud together in 2005 when I was three years old. I always saw them learning and bonding together. It seemed very natural, meaningful and important to me, but not out of the ordinary.

As a new cycle was approaching, my younger brother Yosi said he wanted to begin learning with my dad as well. I was ten at the time and looking for a project that I could take on for my Bat Mitzvah, so I decided to join. A few years later my younger sister, Bracha, joined as well. And ever since my grandparents moved to Israel, I've had the privilege of learning with my grandfather too.

In my experience, the hardest part of learning the Daf is starting the practice. Deciding to learn every day for seven and a half years is an intimidating goal. Luckily, my dad was very determined, so once we decided we were starting, that was it. There were no exceptions: if you missed a Daf, you had to make it up another day. It can be hard at times, but that's part of the beauty of it—the Torah is always a part of our lives, no matter what else we are doing.

It wasn't always easy. Not every Daf is interesting (although my dad might say otherwise), and with everything going on in our lives, it can be hard to find the time for learning. Thankfully, I had tons of support. My father always took time out of his day to learn with us, make sure that we understood the page, point out all of the interesting details and encourage us to develop our own thoughts and opinions. My family and friends were always there for me, displaying patience, understanding and encouragement.

The experience has taught me many things. I now have an understanding of what our religion is based on—the concepts and ideas that go beyond mere technical points of Jewish law. I enjoyed reading the stories about Jews who lived during Talmudic times, the way our ancestors thought and how they shaped our religion and practice. These things have changed the way I think about Judaism and life in general.

Often, I found that what I learned in the Daf was directly connected to my life at the time. I think that anyone can relate to the Gemara (Talmud) and that it affects each person differently, depending on who they are and how they think.

The rabbis in the Gemara challenged every imaginable idea, but always with the understanding of the importance of Torah and belief in God. Respect was always maintained for the generations that came before, even as halacha (Jewish law) was applied to new situations that arose.

I learned how to follow complicated discussions and seek deeper meaning in topics I would otherwise never have thought relevant to my daily life. I learned that it's okay to be wrong or to admit what you do not know. I learned that one should stand up for their opinion, but that the real challenge is to truly listen and learn from what others have to say.

One of the truly remarkable things about the great rabbis in the Gemara is that most of them had other jobs. Learning Torah was of central importance, but they understood how Torah was to be integrated into people's lives. My goal in studying the Daf was never to decide on intricacies of Jewish law, but to similarly integrate Torah into my daily life as a Jewish woman.

This Siyum HaShas — or celebration of the completion of the 7 and a half year reading of the Talmud a page per day — was a very proud moment, as three generations of our family finished the Talmud Bavli together in our home in Israel. I could not imagine a more special family experience.

This chapter of learning, at times leaning on my father's shoulder with my brother on his other side, later to be joined by my younger sister and my Zaidy, has now ended. As I prepare to finish high school and move on to the next chapter of my life, I can't imagine a better experience to have bonded me to my family and to prepare me for a life of continued learning and new experiences.

Want to study Daf Yomi? Click here to sign up for My Jewish Learning's free email series exploring insights from each page of the Talmud.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media. ■

JCLP plan programs on money, activism, and more

Paige Walker, special to the WJN

After a brief recess following the exams at the end of the Fall semester, the students of the Jewish Communal Leadership Program are already hitting the ground running with their Winter Semester. By the time of publication, JCLP will have already hosted their first public program of the term. An afternoon with Rabbi Michael Lerner is expected to be an engaging event on the afternoon of Friday, January 31 at the School of Social Work. Additionally, both the first and second year students find themselves busy preparing for their own programs. The annual Communal Conversation, a community event created and facilitated entirely by the second year students, will take place this year on Sunday, March 29th at the School of Social Work. The theme will explore attitudes towards and relationships with money within the Jewish Community. A list of speakers and day of event logistical information will be available in the coming weeks.

With the graduating students focused on the Communal Conversation, first year students have their attention on the upcoming Limmud Michigan event on Sunday, March 22 at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. They have proposed a workshop on Jewish involvement in progressive movements. "Stand Up or Step Back? OR Show Up for Who?" aims to provide a space to discuss the responsibility and challenges of Jews in social justice movements.

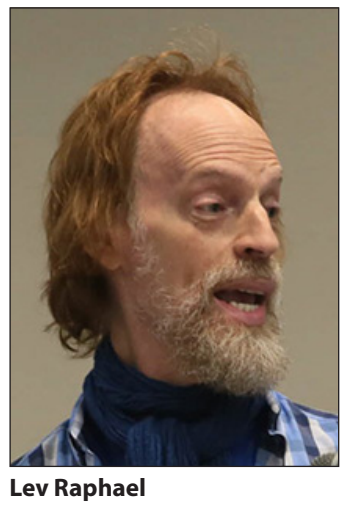
The semester wraps up with the annual graduation celebration. This year's intimate ceremony and brunch reception will feature keynote remarks from Beth Huppin of JFS Seattle. Huppin, Director of Project Kavod/Dignity, was a visitor to the JCLP weekly seminar last year and was a unanimous pick amongst the graduating students when deciding their speaker. The ceremony will take place at the School of Social Work on Sunday, May 3rd at 10:15 a.m.

Finally, in addition to programs, JCLP will be doing a bit of traveling. Day-long Site visits will focus on the range of services provided by organizations in Metro Detroit and Dearborn. After many years in the making, Karla Goldman, JCLP Director, is planning a 10-day trip to Israel for JCLP students and alumni. Updates on all of these exciting things will follow! ■

December 14, 2019

By Lev Raphael

As a Jewish author dedicated to *tikkun olam* since I started publishing books, it's always been important to me to build bridges, so I've been happy to speak to non-Jewish audiences whenever I can. Sometimes, though, I'm startled to hear myself introduced as "a second generation Holocaust survivor."



Lev Raphael

In my opening remarks, I gently point out that my experience as an American-born son of survivors isn't at all like what my parents suffered. I don't belabor the point, but I need to be clear: I'm not a survivor, I'm the son of survivors.

Like many "2Gs," I've done therapy to deal with the legacy of my parents' suffering. And I've been fortunate to find healing through writing. I've been thrilled to see my work taught in college courses alongside books by luminaries like Saul Bellow and Toni Morrison.

In the mid-2000s my life changed dramatically when I published, *My Germany*, a memoir about what that country has meant to me as a Jewish writer. It led to two book tours across that taboo land itself. I was even asked by some hosts if I would do readings in German. I studied German to make that possible, something I had never imagined doing. Honestly, I never even imagined owning a German coffee maker.

I crossed a bridge on those tours, but I want to be 100% clear. I'm not remotely talking about forgiveness: what I have been able to achieve is something closer to reconciliation. I can travel there; I can enjoy German movies and food; I can speak to Germans–in German and even–maintain friendships with Germans, knowing that the historical breach is enormous and always will be.

I moved on, felt that I had put the fear, anxiety, and dread I'd grown up with to rest. But when Jews were massacred in Paris in 2015, I had nightmares. And each time in the last few years that Jews have been gunned down anywhere because they were Jews, or cemetery headstones have been defaced or knocked over, it's been like another gut punch.

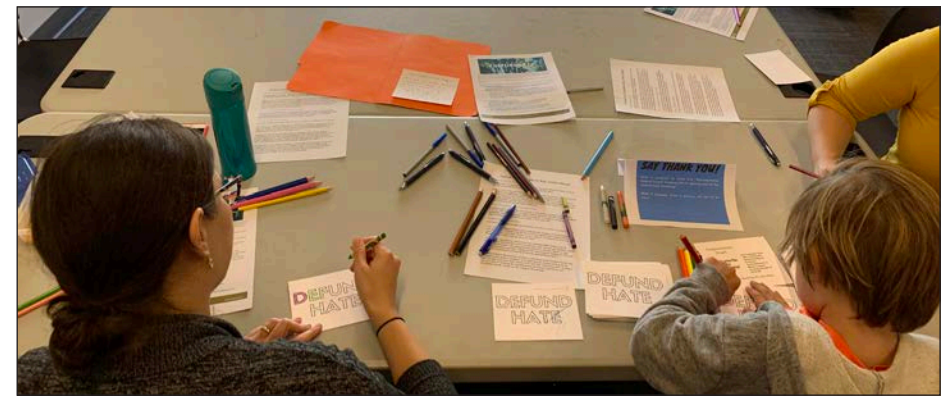
My sense of security in the world has been profoundly shaken and I haven't fully recovered. The mid-December day I read about a Beverly Hills synagogue being broken into and trashed, and saw photos of Torah scrolls ripped and desecrated, my first thought was, "Fire." That's all that was missing to make this a version of Kristallnacht or a scene going back to the horrors of the Middle Ages.

I cried that morning. But I also started writing, with my late mother's voice in my head. Before I even knew what God was, before I had even thought about what I wanted to do with my life, my mother would tell me that her father always said "You have to use the gifts that God gave to you." No matter what happens, that is still my goal, in honor of her memory and his. To keep writing, to keep remembering. ■

Teaching ourselves to confront racism, antisemitism

Molly Kleinman, special to the WJN

Bend the Arc Ann Arbor's Moral Minyan is kicking off 2020 with a series of learning and reflection opportunities focused on race, antisemitism, and white nationalism. In January, the group is partnering with the Anti-Defamation League of Michigan for an opportunity to reflect on our own relationship to race. In February, hosted by the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor and the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, parents of children ages 10 and under are invited to learn from social justice educators about how to talk to Jewish children about race. Later events planned for the Spring will explore coalition building across difference and interfaith work to counter white nationalism.



"As the horrific antisemitic events during Chanukah in New York, last year in Pittsburgh, and the growing number of incidents occurring around the country make clear, white nationalism and the hatred it encourages threatens all of us–Jews of all colors, people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ people, and more," said Moral Minyan co-founder Naomi Goldberg.

That's why, Goldberg says, Bend the Arc Ann Arbor Moral Minyan is gathering over the next few months to examine ways in which racism impacts Jews, how antisemitism and racism motivate white nationalism, and how to grow the connections between Jewish identities and actively combating racism and white nationalism. The end goal of Bend the Arc Moral Minyan is to create spaces where multiracial Jewish communities can be in solidarity with communities of color to build an inclusive, diverse democracy in which all can thrive.

Bend the Arc Ann Arbor sees urgency in these conversations. Rebecca Epstein, a co-founder of the Ann Arbor Moral Minyan, explained, "Since the early days of his presidential campaign, President Trump's comments about immigrants, people of color, and women have brought back into the mainstream harmful and dangerous ideas that were relegated to the dark corners of the internet just a few years ago. His administration's cruel and inhumane policies toward migrants dehumanize those seeking safety in our borders."

Bend the Arc Ann Arbor members see Trump's comments and actions being celebrated by white nationalists because they see him as speaking in code to them and affirming their world view in which the United States is experiencing an invasion by black and brown people, orchestrated and masterminded by a global elite led by Jews. The work Bend the Arc Ann Arbor is doing, they say, is needed all the more given that Trump will be in Ann Arbor at Crisler Arena for a presidential debate in October.

On January 26, in partnership with the Anti-Defamation League of Michigan, Bend the Arc is hosting a learning session to explore participant's experiences and assumptions about race, including the extent to which white Jews benefit from white privilege and need to do more to build a welcoming anti-racist Jewish community and to strengthen ties with other communities experiencing hate.

On February 2 at the JCC of Greater Ann Arbor in partnership with the JCC and the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, Bend the Arc is hosting an afternoon of learning from social justice educators about why and how to talk to Jewish children about race. Advanced registration is required. Email bendthearc.a2@gmail.com to sign up.

Later in the spring, Bend the Arc's Moral Minyan will gather to reflect on how best to work with coalitions to achieve policy and social change while recognizing the ways in which racism and anti-Semitism threaten those very coalitions; and building relationships with multiracial and interfaith communities to counter white nationalism in the Ann Arbor community and across the country.

"This work isn't easy or simple, but now is the time to engage deeply in reflecting on our own assumptions and biases, gaining skills to create the world we want, and reaching out to others who are targeted and vulnerable. We hope people will consider joining us," Goldberg said. Bend the Arc Ann Arbor describes itself as a multiracial, multiethnic, and multi-denominational Jewish space where Jews can learn and engage in meaningful social justice work. All Jews (unaffiliated, secular, or belonging to any faith community) are welcome to participate. ■

TBE Events February 2020

Families with Young Children (FYC): Tot Shabbat Service

Fridays, February 7, 14 & 21, 5:45 p.m., TBE Sanctuary

5:45 p.m. | Tot (0–5 year olds) Shabbat Services with Rabbi Whinston and Cantor Hayut

6:15 p.m. Dinner for Tot Shabbat | 6:45 p.m. Shira Service

All of your favorite songs led by TBE's tot team, Cantor Hayut and Rabbi Whinston. Join us for macaroni and cheese, fish sticks, applesauce, and a salad bar immediately following the short service. Dinner is just $5 per person. Buy a punch card ahead of time for a discounted price. Punch cards are available in the TBE office.

Weekly Lunch & Learn

Fridays, February 7, 14, 21 & 28, TBE Adult Lounge, Noon

Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Sessions are open to the entire community. Feel free to bring your lunch.

Saturday Torah Study

Saturdays, February 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29, 8:50 a.m., TBE Adult Lounge

Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

Women's Torah Study

Mondays, February 10 & 24, 7:00 p.m.

An in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion led by Cantor Regina Hayut. The group will explore various passages from the portion looking at several translations and commentaries from a variety of scholars from Talmudic times to the modern day. No Hebrew knowledge necessary to participate in the discussion. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org.

Guitar-led Shabbat Service

February 28, 6:30-8:30 p.m., TBE Sanctuary

Join us for a special, musical Shabbat service led by Rabbi Whinston and Cantor Hayut. This service is engaging and open to all members of the community.

Meditation with Linda Greene

Thursdays, February 6, 13, 20 & 27, 1:00 p.m., TBE Chapel

Linda Greene offers brief Jewish teachings and leads a 20-30 minute meditation time. Contact Linda Greene, lingreene@gmail.com, with questions.

Tot Shabbat Tastes Ann Arbor

Fridays, February 21, Tot Service at 5:45 p.m. and Dinner at 6:15 p.m.,

Tot Shabbat Tastes Ann Arbor is resuming for the 2019-2020 year! We will meet on the third Friday of each month, and enjoy a rotating menu from local, kid-friendly restaurants. $5/children, $8/adults, $25/maximum per family.

TBE Families Meet-Ups

Sundays, February 9, 10:00 a.m., Offsite

Join TBE Families for our rotating monthly meet-up! There will be opportunities for play, snacks, and socializing. Contact Beth Pearson, bethlpearson@gmail.com, with questions.

Women of TBE: Historical Novel Reading Group

Monday, February 10, 12:30 p.m., TBE Library

The WTBE Reading Group meets on the second Monday of each month, October through June. Contact Molly Lindner, burnham@umich.edu.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Classes

Mondays, February 3, 10, 17 & 24, 12:30-1:30 pm & 6:00-7:00 p.m., Adult Lounge

Join Cantor Regina Hayut for either an afternoon session or an evening session for one hour. To join the class, or for more information, contact Cantor Hayut, cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org.

Genesis Concert Series Live

Saturday, February 1, 7:00 p.m., TBE Sanctuary

Featuring the brightest young artists on the brink of their professional careers in music, with the adult choirs of TBE and St. Clare's. Free admission.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle

Monday, February 24, 7:00 p.m., TBE Chapel & Rooms 7 & 8

Please join us as we initiate a monthly Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle. We seek to create an intimate community of women that strengthens our ties to each other through our connection to Shekinah, the feminine indwelling Divine presence. Join us for socializing at 6:30 pm before the circle begins. Contact Trina Fuller, tfuller817@gmail.com, with questions. ■

Buenos Aires ordains its first Reform rabbi

JTA Staff

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (JTA) — The first Reform rabbinical school in Buenos Aires has ordained its first rabbi.

Rabbi Diego Elman, holding his ordination certificate, is flanked by, from left, Rabbis Roberto Graetz, Reuben Nisenbom and Rabbi Sergio Bergman.. (Courtesy of Ibero American Institute for Rabbinical Education of the World Union for Progressive Judaism)

Rabbi Diego Elman has started working at Mishkan: The Jewish Spirituality Center in the Argentine capital following the approval of his rabbinical studies by a specially convened rabbinical court, or beit din, late last month.

Elman is the first rabbi to be ordained by the Ibero American Institute for Rabbinical Education of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, or WUPJ, in Buenos Aires. The official ordination ceremony will be held in mid-May at the city's iconic Temple Libertad, the oldest Jewish house of worship in the country.

Rabbinical leaders of the Reform movement in Latin America — Reuben Nisenbom, Roberto Graetz, and Sergio Bergman – made up the court.

Graetz, who traveled from San Francisco to Argentina to serve on the beit din, stressed the importance "of having arrived at this auspicious moment for the consolidation of a liberal Jewish movement in the region."

Ibero-America is a region in Central and South America made up of areas where Spanish or Portuguese are the predominant languages, usually former territories of Portugal or Spain.

In addition to Elman, the court evaluated eight other students from Argentina, Brazil and Chile. They were promoted to the final stage of the school's rabbinical training.

The institution, which was launched in 2016, also has students from Belgium, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru and Spain.

Buenos Aires also is home to the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary, founded in 1962 by Rabbi Marshall Meyer, which has ordained approximately 110 Conservative rabbis since 1972. ■

Reform Jewish supports African-Americans, continues from page 1

The resolution is part of a growing movement in progressive American circles to support reparations that was galvanized in 2014 by an essay in The Atlantic called "The Case for Reparations." Democrats have introduced bills in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to create a commission on studying reparations. Several Democratic presidential candidates, including Sens. Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Cory Booker, have supported the measures. Booker introduced the Senate version.

The Reform resolution cites the biblical precept that humans are created in God's image and the rabbinic emphasis on all of humanity being equal given its shared descent from Adam and Eve. The resolution also calls on Reform congregations to study systemic racism, undertake efforts to combat it and actively promote racial equality.

Two other resolutions approved Friday also address issues in American society at large. One seeks a ban on private prisons and the closure of those that currently exist. Another calls on the government to increase funding and encourage medical treatment to combat the opioid addiction crisis.

Jacobs said the reparations resolution is part of the movement's ongoing efforts to work on behalf of people of color. In his speech, he mentioned the movement's fellowship for Jewish minorities. The biennial conference also included sessions on addressing racial justice and creating space for Jews of color and other marginalized groups in Reform synagogues.

"Schedule a training about equity, inclusion and anti-racism in your community," Jacobs said. "Learn about unconscious and implicit bias and how to be a better ally. When marginalized members of your community find the courage to speak up, treat this as a gift and listen deeply to what they have to say." ■

Beth Israel Illuminated

Amanda Glucklich, special to the WJN

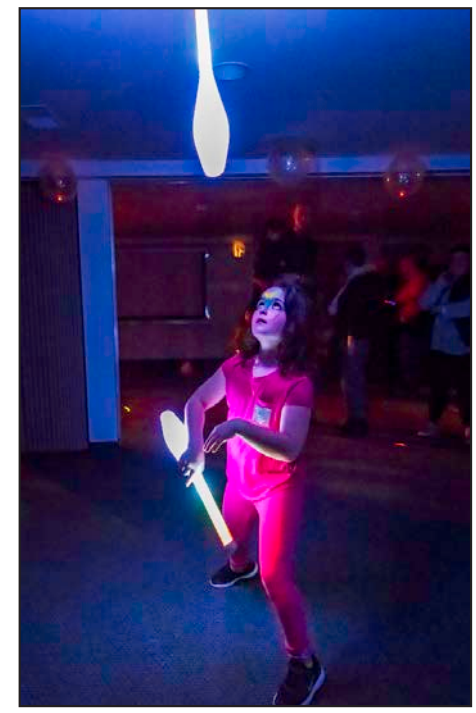
Iluminate: An Experiential Festival of Lights" was the first fundraiser of its kind at Beth Israel Congregation. The event successfully raised funds through multiple sponsorship levels and ticket sales for Beth Israel's expanding offering of family programs. Spearheaded by Beth Israel's new Director of Engagement and Programs, Amanda Glucklich, "Illuminate" engaged participants with the concept and physicality of light in untraditional ways.

The event began with a beautiful Havdallah service led by Rav Nadav. Participants of all ages then gathered to feast on a Chanukah-inspired meal prepared by in-house chef Amanda Fisher and volunteers. There were multi-colored beet, zucchini-kale, curried sweet potato and traditional potato latkes, a sumptuous lentil and sweet potato soup and a salad bar. Homemade cookies, donuts and a hot chocolate bar rounded out the plant-based dinner.

After enjoying the nourishing meal, there were multiple experiences to partake in: you could get your face painted with glow-in-the-dark face paint, learn how to juggle with a roller-skating Detroit Circus performer in the Disco Room, and play light-up bowling or ring-toss. Though the planetarium presentations were cancelled, participants had a blast making personalized menorahs with sustainable materials. "Illuminate was fantastic! Our family enjoyed the art project, black light dance party, and exploring the Beth Israel campus as well as the tasty, casual dinner. We appreciated the whole evening, from the welcoming Havdalah through the active events," said Rachel Levy, a Beth Israel Congregation member.

"Illuminate was an exciting, out-of-the-box program to celebrate Hanukkah and bring together our synagogue's community," said Marie-Adele Kress, another Beth Israel congregation member. "While my young kids had fun dancing disco, playing with slime in the blacklight room, and eating *sufganiyot*, they (and I) also greatly enjoyed the reflective mysticism session with Rabbi Caine." Rav Nadav's learning session, Spin the Dreidel of Jewish Mysticism, engaged participants in the sanctuary which was completely dark except for rainbow LED tealights, giving the space a totally different vibe and feel, the perfect space for mystical discussion.

Longtime congregant Meira Miller said, "Illuminate was a wonderful congregational event, drawing people of all ages to a warm, festive evening, full of good food and music and lots of interesting activities!" Leftover food was boxed up and donated the next day to the Mission. ■



Lawsuit against picketers and city, continued from page 1

with legal experts, and consideration by the Board and the Protest Response Committee. This decision is part of an ongoing process, and our most appropriate path forward is under continual review. We encourage you to read the pamphlet from the Protest Response Committee, available in the lobby, that explains why we have taken the approach we have up to now. We are also continuing to engage with the City of Ann Arbor and our City Council representatives regarding this issue."

The lawsuit has been assigned to Judge Victoria Roberts of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.

The lawsuit includes twenty counts that claim violations of city, state and federal statutes ranging from the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Federal Constitution to local Permit and Code ordinances. The counts include a charge of conspiracy between the picketers and the city due to lack of enforcement of City Code sign provisions. The lawsuit seeks to show that the "deliberately harassing conduct of the protestors week after week for 16 years, is not protected by the free speech provision of the First Amendment," and is rather prohibiting the plaintiff's exercise of his First Amendment right of freedom of religion.

The lawsuit also requests a jury trial and seeks damages for emotional distress.

The *Washtenaw Jewish News* has reported on the antisemitic and harassing nature of the picketers many times over the years, including the front page story on April 2017 announcing that the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) had added Deir Yassin Remembered to a list of hate groups because of its embrace of Holocaust denial. "Last month the SPLC placed Deir Yassin Remembered on its hate register because its members deny the Holocaust and sympathize with Nazi Germany. Mark Potok, Senior Fellow at the SPLC and a leading authority on political extremism, in an interview with Michigan Radio February 28, [2017]explained the SPLC 's position as follows: 'We list them because over the years they have come to more and more explicitly embrace real-life Holocaust denial. The kind of Holocaust denial that these people practice is essentially a defense of Germany and National Socialism, that is to say, Nazism."

Though the picketers have over the years included up to a dozen people, for the last year the numbers have dwindled from 3 to 5 people, who between 9:30 and 11:30 during Saturday morning services place up to 20 placards that read "Resist Jewish Power," "Jewish Power Corrupts," "No More Holocaust Movies," "Boycott Israel," "Stop U.S. Aid to Israel" and "End the Palestinian holocaust."

The synagogue's "Protest Response Group" has over the course of many years actively pursued a strategy of continuing congregational life as usual, denying the picketers the attention they seek, making sure applicable city ordinances are followed, and creating community alliances for support and understanding. This strategy has resulted in several limitations placed on the picketers including narrowing their location on the public sidewalk and preventing them from videotaping congregants.

City officials have said they cannot further intervene citing free speech rights. Mayor Christopher Taylor told the Associated Press "The city has worked with synagogue leadership and congregants for years on this issue. I recognize the pain caused by the protesters and it's disgusting. We believe we've acted in accordance with our legal obligations." ■

February Events at Beth Israel Congregation

World Wide Wrap
Sunday, February 2, 9:30 a.m.
About the time two NFL football teams begin wrapping athletic tape in preparation for the Super Bowl, Conservative Jews around the world – and at Beth Israel - will be wrapping themselves in tefillin for World Wide Wrap. Every time we read the V'ahavta portion of the Shema, we read "Uk'shar'tam l'ot al yadekha v'hayu l'totafot bein einekha" – "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes." This is one of the four times (and twice in the full Shema) that we are commanded to put on tefillin. The World Wide Wrap was created 20 years ago to help us learn or in many cases re-learn how to lay tefillin and make it an important part of our life. We invite everyone (post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah aged) to join us for this meaningful morning.
If you have never put on tefillin before (or think you have forgotten how) we will have spare sets available and many people experienced to assist you in laying tefillin. Lessons will be followed by a short shacharit service, our annual polar bear picture, and bagels and lox.

Intro to Judaism with Rav Nadav
Sunday, February 2 and 16, 2 p.m.
Though directed at people who are considering conversion, this serious examination of the main dimensions of Judaism --from mysticism, to Talmud, to Jewish Holidays and rituals – is open to anyone who wants to deepen their Jewish literacy. This course is open to members and non-members.

Tu B'Shvat with Black Diesel Coffee
Sunday, February 9, 1 p.m.
Explore the coffee tree with local Black Diesel Coffee proprietor Nick Ferris and Beth Israel's own barista, Rav Nadav. Learn about how Black Diesel works directly with small farms, roast coffee with Rav Nadav, enjoy a fresh cuppa and some light refreshments (and give thanks to trees)! For more information, contact Amanda at engage@bethisrael-aa.org.

Theology Book Club
Wednesdays, 8 p.m.
Beth Israel Congregation's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English.

Shabbat Limmud
Saturday, February 8 and 29, 9 a.m.
Held before Shabbat morning services by Rabbi Robert Dobrusin, this session offers a lively discussion on Parashat HaShavua, the Torah portion of the week and other traditional texts. Join us in the library for Torah study over coffee and cake!

Tot Shabbat
Saturday, February 8 and 22, 11:15 a.m.
Tot Shabbat is our special Shabbat morning program for preschoolers and their parents with songs, stories, prayers, and the Shabbat "Mystery Box" Tot Shabbat meets on the second and fourth Saturday of each month.

Applied Prayer Session (formerly Learner's Shabbat)
Saturday, February 15, 9:30 a.m.
Rav Nadav is leading alternative Saturday morning service experiences in our beautiful new M&M Chapel from 9:30 to 10:15 am, at which time we'll move upstairs to join the main service. During this time we focus on a single prayer. We learn the meanings of the prayer, practice it, and then deepen our davening through meditation or healing. We hope you will join us in the spirit of experimentation and learning as we gather in the chapel.

Parent's Night Out
Saturday, February 15, 6 - 9 p.m.
Parents' Night Out is a new Beth Israel program for PARENTS! Drop off your children (ages 5-15 years old) at the synagogue and enjoy an evening to yourselves. Children will be served dinner and there will be a movie playing along with some crafts. Cost for members is $10 for the first child and $8 for each additional; non-members are an additional $5 per child. Please direct any inquiries to Amanda at engage@bethisrael-aa.org.

Quiz Night
Saturday, February 15, 7 - 9 p.m.
This 13th annual Beth Israel Quiz Night promises to be another fun competitive evening for adults. The social program is a team based multi-media trivia game. Whether one comes with their own team or forms one at the game, participants are sure to have a great time as they work together to answer trivia questions, decipher puzzles, and complete other challenges in order to earn the title of Beth Israel's Trivia Masters.
The cost is $10 per person. You can register online by using the link on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org) or by contacting Beth at 665-9897 or office@bethisrael-aa.org. If you need babysitting for your children (ages 5 - 15) Parents' Night Out has been conveniently scheduled for the same evening.

Mitzvah Day!
Sunday, February 16, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Mitzvah Day is Beth Israel's day of giving. The congregation will support food collection for Alpha House (stay tuned for more information). BIRS Middle School students and their families will prepare and serve meals at Alpha House. Alpha House is a residency and support program for families experiencing homelessness that was created by the Interfaith Hospitality Network, of which BIC is a member. For more information and to get involved, please contact Amanda at engage@bethisrael-aa.org.

Volunteer Appreciation Brunch
Sunday, February 23, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Please join all past, present, and future BIC volunteers for a delicious brunch as well as a short educational program on the 2020 census. The brunch is free, but RSVPs are requested. Please contact the Beth Israel office by Monday, February 17, at office@bethisrael-aa.org. This program is sponsored by the Social Action Committee.

What's So Funny About Israel?
Sunday, February 23, 4 – 5:30 p.m.
Benji Lovitt, comedian, educator, and writer, comes to Beth Israel and helps us use humor and laughter to narrow the gap between our understanding of Israel and our understanding of ourselves as American Jews. Sponsored by the Israel Center at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. For more information, please contact Amanda at engage@bethisrael-aa.org.

Save the Date! Rosenberg Scholar-in-Residence Weekend Featuring Deborah Sacks Mintz
Thursday, March 19 – 22, 2020
A transformative prayer leader and musician, Deborah Sacks Mintz has served innovative institutions around the country as a teacher of Torah and communal Jewish music. As the Community Singing Consultant of Hadar's Rising Song Institute, Deborah combines musical scholarship and practice to cultivate the grassroots musical and spiritual creativity of the Jewish people. Watch for more details soon! The Rosenberg Lecture Series is endowed through a generous contribution by Vic & Val Rosenberg in memory of Cantor Alfred & Alice Rosenberg. ■

BIC joins Seal of Sustainability Cohort

Amanda Glucklich, special to the WJN

Joining the ranks of Jewish institutions across the country, Beth Israel will be a part of the 2020 Hazon Seal of Sustainability Cohort. Hazon: The Jewish Lab For Sustainability is a nonprofit organization that seeks to "create new vision" in the Jewish community through outdoor and environmental education. In Hebrew, hazon means "vision." The Hazon Seal of Sustainability is "is an annual program that provides guidance and support to advance sustainability related education, action, and advocacy in your Jewish institution, organization, and community. Rooted in Jewish tradition, participation in the Hazon Seal program will, over time, make your community healthier and more sustainable, both Jewishly and environmentally!"

For over a decade, a team of BIC volunteers has maintained a community garden plot at County Farm Park from which fifty percent of the harvested produce is donated to Food Gatherers (a local organization which exists to alleviate hunger and eliminate its causes). The other fifty percent of produce is used for communal meals at the synagogue.

Affiliating with Hazon is just the latest environmentally-friendly and sustainable initiative that Beth Israel has taken on. As a new partner with the Washtenaw County Division of Public Works & Water Resources Commissioner, the Conservative/Masorti synagogue implemented a campus-wide composting program. All snacks and meals are served using 100% compostable products: plates, cups, cutlery, napkins, tablecloths, etc. Compost is collected weekly by the county. By participating in these initiatives the congregation has taken on the task of being *shomrei adamah*, guardians of the Earth.

Over the course of the next year, Beth Israel will work in tandem with Hazon to develop its own 'roadmap' to becoming a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly congregation. In addition to maintaining the garden at County Farm Park, Beth Israel will develop a future action plan for 2020 and beyond. For more information and to get involved, contact Director of Engagement and Programs, Amanda Glucklich, at engage@bethisrael-aa.org. ■

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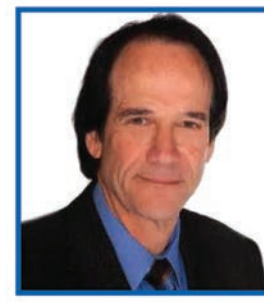
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Family Papers

Reviewed by Eeta Gershow

This book will be catnip to anyone who loves genealogy and historic reconstruction. *Family Papers: A Sephardic Journey Through the Twentieth Century* traces the extensive Levy family from Salonica, the Ottoman Empire, (now Thessaloniki, Greece) from the early 1800s to the present. Diaries of Sa'adi a-Levy (circa 1820--1903) have been preserved and form the core of the story. His eleven children who survived to adulthood and their offspring and close relatives are represented in a two-page family tree with more than sixty names.

Following World War I, that ended the Ottoman Empire, Salonica's large Jewish population left what then became Christian-dominated Thessaloniki, Greece. The Levy family scattered, with most settling in France, England, Portugal, Spain, India, South Africa and the United States. The last two of Sa'adi a-Levy's children lived long enough to be killed at Auschwitz. Several generations ago, the name was modernized to Levy. Today, there is a museum in Thessaloniki honoring the Sephardic Jewish population, of which a small remnant remains.

The book is divided into chapters devoted to 32 family members. Many achieved prominence in their countries and professions of choice. One of Sa'adi's great-grandsons, Vital, had been the family's shameful secret. He was a particularly sadistic member of Hitler's SS troops and was known as "the Jews' nightmare." Among the witnesses at his trial for war crimes were relatives who had survived Auschwitz. It is a measure of the trust the family members developed with the author that she was given this material.

Sarah Abrevaya Stein is a master detective and storyteller. Over several years, she tracked down members of the family throughout the world, many of whom had preserved documents and pictures, which they readily shared with her. She acknowledges that this kind of research is made easier today with internet technology that allowed materials to be scanned and transmitted. Nevertheless, she was tireless as she worked with this far-flung family, all of whom were proud to have their story known. The review in *The New York Times* describes her as having ''ferocious research talents...and a writing voice that is admirably light and human...that has produced a book about the frailty of ties that hold together places and people.

Stein has authored or co-edited eight earlier books, with a particular interest in the Sephardic Jewish community. This includes publishing the diaries of Sa'adi a-Levy, the basis of this current book. She holds an endowed chair at University of California-Los Angeles, where she teaches Sephardic studies.

The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation book group will be discussing Family Papers at its April meeting, Sunday, April 12, noon to 2 p.m. Contact for more info: Gregory Saltzman gsaltzman@albion.edu. ■

Dining with the Family
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When you're the only Jew

Review by Deborah Katz

What do Dodge City, rural west Michigan, and Judaism have in common? In *Welcome to Replica Dodge,* Natalie Ruth Joynton shares her story of reimagining herself. From her Christian upbringing in big city Houston, Texas to embracing herself as a Jewish adult living the country life in Mason County, Michigan; Joynton chronicles the challenges and the joys of becoming. Along the way she gives her readers a glimpse into what life may be like for Jews who live in rural America, far from the support systems provided by synagogues, Jewish Community Centers, and Jewish social networks. Readers come to appreciate the resilience and commitment this lifestyle requires along with the joys it offers.

With Joe, her fiancée raised in Alpena, Michigan, Joynton moves to a farmhouse fifteen country miles from their jobs as professors at the community college in Ludington. In the front yard of the four acre property is a collection of buildings and a sign saying Dodge City. The nine buildings–including a general store, a schoolhouse, a saloon, and a church–are outfitted with antiques arranged to mimic the actual Kansas frontier town of the same name. It is here, with no synagogue in reach, no Jewish community to support her, and preparing to marry her Catholic-raised scientist husband, that Joynton explores how she will be Jewish.

Assuming that their life in the country will not be permanent, Joynton learns about

the challenges of winter near Lake Michigan and finds her physical strength stacking enough firewood to warm their house for the winter. Like the people of the historic Dodge City, Joynton is a pioneer creating a map for her own way of living. As a Jew, she feels like a stranger in a strange land. At the same time, she makes connections and creates community for herself with those around her.

Throughout *Welcome to Replica Dodge*, Joynton muses about the relationship between Jews and life in the country. Her mentor during her conversion process reminds her that Jews practice together. Is it really possible to have a Jewish life so far from a community, particularly with a non-Jewish husband? Joynton looks to biblical texts, American and Jewish history, and even to an economics research journal in her quest. What has happened to the Jewish connection to farming and to the land? Why has Judaism become so associated with urban life? And, most importantly, could Jewish Natalie Ruth Joynton adjust to life in rural Mason County?

Welcome to Replica Dodge is a memoir to be enjoyed through many lenses. It is a sensitive, touching story of finding one's self and making connections with others. It is a story of the blessings and challenges of country life. It is a deeply Jewish story of knowing what it means to be a stranger and of creating community wherever one is. And it is a love story. ■

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Adler's *Balak und Bilam* performed in Potsdam

By Marianne Adler Aaron

Throughout my lifetime, I've taken part in numerous discussions about whether there is life after death. My belief has always been that we live on in the people we have touched and the family we have loved. For those, however, who have been blessed with special talents like composing music, producing art, or writing, their legacy is even broader. On December 19, 2019, during the week of my father's 64th *yahrzeit*, he was alive and well with us in Potsdam, Germany at a performance of his oratorio, *Balak und Bilam*, which he composed in 1934.

Marianne Adler Aaron and her brother Sam Adler

At the Nikolai Church in Potsdam

The performance was part of the 9th Annual Louis Lewandowski Festival Berlin, celebrating 200 years of music for the Synagogue of Southern Germany, featuring music by German Jewish composers who had to flee Germany in the 1930's. Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894) became one of the first to compose music for cantor and choir, continuing what had begun with chazzan and musicologist Maier Kohn. Kohn had published the first modern collection of synagogue chants in 1839. My father, Hugo Chaim Adler, was born in 1894. Throughout his life, he felt that the significance of the year of his birth, coinciding with the death of Lewandowski, destined him to continue Lewandowski's work.

My father was the chief Cantor at the Haupsynagogue in Mannheim, Germany and a composer of liturgical as well as secular music. He wrote several oratorios or cantatas; *Balak und Bilam* was his most popular, being performed about 20 times between 1934-1938, including several times in Palestine, and a radio performance over the BBC radio network. It uses the biblical translation by Martin Buber/Franz Rosenzweig, since Buber was a personal friend of my father.

Because of the tremendous success of *Balak und Bilam*, my father was encouraged to write large works for the Jüdischer Kulturbund. The Kulturbund, established in 1933, hired Jewish artists, musicians, and actors who had been fired from German institutions and were prohibited from performing with or for non-Jews. His work with the Kulturbund inspired my father to compose the *Akeda* in 1937, the story of the binding of Isaac. It was to premier in March of 1938. This work was written with the hidden aspect of comparing Isaac's near sacrifice with the persecution of the Jews of Germany. The meaning was very cleverly disguised so that the censor did not catch the inference and passed the text. However, someone in the censor's office must have reread the text and the SS came to the dress rehearsal and forbade the work to be performed, confiscating all scores and parts and burning them. After that, no major work of my father's was performed in Germany, since one scheduled for the 9th of November 1938 (the night of Kristallnacht) obviously could not take place.

Although many in my father's congregation were leaving Germany, my father kept insisting that his congregation needed him; it wasn't 'til the spring of 1938 that he even took steps to emigrate. The German quota at that time was filled but because of his mazal of being born in Antwerp, where my grandparents lived for only three years, we were able to come under the Belgian quota. We were still in Mannheim during Kristallnacht (but that's a story for another time). Fortunately, in December 1938, my family – father, mother, my brother Sam and I were able to leave Germany.

After we came to the United States, my father became the cantor of Temple Emanuel in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he continued to compose several more biblical cantatas, including Jonah, and he wrote much liturgical music as well. He decided to re-write *Balak und Bilam*; it was translated into English and the score was changed considerably. The performance that we heard in Berlin in December was the original version.

Balak und Bilam features a narrator, three soloists, string orchestra, piano, organ and chorus. This performance in Potsdam took place in the magnificent cathedral-like setting of the Nikolai Church. Participating were three unique choirs, Boston's Zamir Chorale, the Jerusalem Academy Chamber Choir, and The Synagogal Ensemble of Berlin.

As I sat there listening to this beautiful piece of music written by my father, of blessed memory, surrounded by my husband, Ron, of 66 years; our oldest son, David, who is a professor of Hebrew Bible at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati; his wife, Marjory, a law professor at University of Cincinnati; and their two grown sons, Joshua and Elisha, now living in Europe, my thoughts wandered to the miracle of the whole happening. My brother, Sam, a renowned composer in his own right, was next to me, smiling at his wife, Emily Freeman Brown who conducted the performance brilliantly.

It also reminded me of another unique incident which happened just a little over a year ago, when twenty of our family members (we have three sons, their wives and six grandchildren) were also in Germany, attending a performance of my brother's music in Mannheim, where we were born. Of course our beautiful synagogue had been destroyed on Kristallnacht, but there is now a viable Jewish community, which has built a handsome new structure. After the concert, they dedicated the hall in honor of my brother, naming it the Samuel Adler Saal and they put up a plaque in the sanctuary with my father's name and the dates that he had served the Jewish community. My parents could never have dreamed that we would experience such events in our lifetime! Eighty years after my family fled this city, the mayor of Mannheim publicly thanked my brother for all he has done to bridge relations between the United States and Germany through his music. During the 1950's, while in the United Sates Army, Sam had formed the 7th Army Symphony Orchestra, touring Germany and showing that, in addition to jazz, Americans can produce classical music. He established many relationships at that time and as a result has been commissioned to write music for several special celebrations for different German cities.

Here we were, proof positive that although Hitler was able to wreak havoc with the Jews of Europe, including murdering many members of our own family, he did not succeed! These concerts have been somewhat surreal, but certainly thrilling for our family and I am so very grateful that we were fortunate enough to be given the privilege and opportunity of attending these historical moments together. ■

"I hope everyone can get married in a way that respects their values."

YOU POWER LOVE

Israeli couple, Liat and Tom, dreamt of being married, in Jerusalem, surrounded by their loved ones. As secular Jews, they did not want their marriage to be through the Chief Rabbinate, which currently controls Jewish marriages in Israel. Through the help of the Israel Religious Expression Platform (iRep), Tom and Liat were connected to Havaya, an organization providing pluralistic Jewish lifecycle events, including weddings. They were able hold their dream Jewish wedding ceremony and also have it be legally recognized.

Since 2016, iRep has been working to support Israeli organizations addressing religious civil rights in Israel, including the ability for Israelis to marry outside the rabbinate or other religious authorities.

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Visiting Israeli artists in their studios and galleries

By Idelle Hammond-Sass

For years, I've been interested in visiting Israel, but it was never the right time, or political events intervened. The opportunity came in an email from the American Guild of Judaic Artists who were organizing a trip focused on the art and artists of Israel. The Guild has an international membership and working with Makor Educational Journeys, they created an outstanding trip that introduced us to individual artists, curators, museums, schools, incubator spaces, galleries and historical sites all over Israel. I would finally

Hadar Kleidman spinning wool

visit, see some of my family, and explore places I had heard so much about. As an artist, jewelry designer, and metalsmith this was a meaningful way to experience the country.

Beginning in the Galilee, we stayed at kibbutz-owned Kinar Hotel on Lake Kinneret. Our group of eleven included artists working in diverse mediums as well as a physician and a collector. We were tasked with considering the questions: "What is Israeli art? Jewish art? and Judaic art?" Over the next week we covered many aspects of these questions.

After seeing the ancient Galilean Synagogues of Tiberius and Capernaum, we explored Safed, (Tzvat) where mystical rabbis and their followers settled in the sixteenth century. It is still a place of pilgrimages and Kabbalistic learning, filled with wonderful art galleries. We spent time at the studio and gallery of Avraham Lowenthal whose paintings and calligraphy refer to the sound of the Shofar as it ascends and descends. By coincidence he had lived in Ann Arbor and studied at University of Michigan, and studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, where we both had the same professor.

At a cemetery at Kinneret that honored some of Israel's early kibbutz movement, the settlement of Kvvustzat Kinneret, we visited the grave of Naomi Shemer, who sang Jerusalem of Gold. She was born in 1930 at this kibbutz which her parents helped found. We listened to her sing as we drove next to the artists' colony Ein Harod in the Jezreel Valley. There we visited home studios and the Janco Dada Museum, built in 1953. Notable in the village are numerous sculptures done by residents over the years.

In Jerusalem we met with the curator at the Israel Museum who explained the way the exhibit on Jewish life from birth to death was organized. While there I discovered their treasure trove of Judaic objects, actual Synagogues from India and Surinam, and amazing Jewish tribal jewelry from the Middle East and North Africa. Also in Jerusalem concurrently was the Jerusalem Biennial which showcases work from Israeli and international artists exploring identity, prayer, gender, diaspora and other issues under the umbrella of "Heaven Can Wait." Magdelena Abramovich used the YMCA pool to install a bank of video screens with chanting Tibetan Monks that became a waterfall of sound that transcended culture. Another exhibit, "Living Underwater" A Jewish Exploration of Climate Change, included Detroit artist Llyn Avadenka, and was underwritten by Hazon and the Beit Venezia in Venice, Italy. The artists in Venice created the images in a workshop atmosphere while climate change was made real by the rising waters.

We later had an opportunity to engage in art and midrash at Kol Haot Center, located in the Hutzot Hayotzer near the old city, where their mission is to illuminate Jewish life with art. We paired up in Chevruta and then made collages about moral values (Middot) such as loving kindness, humility and truth. We also met with Mathew Berkowitz, the creator of the Lovell Family Haggadah. On this street you can also find many other working studios including those of David Moss, silversmith Sari Srulovitch, among others.

Before we left for Tel Aviv, we explored the Ein Karim area and visited Behefetz Kapea, a center for traditional handcrafts. We were treated to a spinning lesson led by Hadar Kleidman as she quoted "And all the wise hearted did spin with their hands…"Exodus 35:25.

We later spent Shabbat with Robin Misgav, the liaison from Makor Educational Journeys

Avraham Lowenthal in his gallery

(our tour organizers) and her husband, Eliahu Misgav, a calligrapher and graphic designer. We explored the old city, the Mahane Yehuda market, and the Museum of Islamic Art. The exhibit "Jewelry Making Past and Present" exhibited metalsmiths of all faiths who made pieces inspired by the collections in the Museum.

After one night in Tel Aviv, we were told to pack our bags and left in the morning due to a missile strike south of Tel Aviv. After being relocated to another Kibbutz resort we continued with a new itinerary. It was a nimble shift in

Mathew Berkowitz

our plans and while nervous we realized that all of Tel Aviv was closed down and most tourists were rerouted. As our tour continued we had opportunities to discuss the situation and the ways in which artists process their reality.

Artist Tzippi Orovitz welcomed us into her home studio and showed us her unique sculptural indoor mezuzot, jewelry made from mulberry paper and found objects. She studied in Boston and had worked as an art therapist. Another artist, Koby Sibony, is a sculptor who works in iron binding wire in his studio at the Ghetto Fighters Kibbutz. His work is playful and intuitive, his studio a former chicken coup. At this kibbutz there is also a monumental and moving museum which holds artifacts and stories of the residents.

We returned to Tel Aviv and spent the day in the Florentin neighborhood visiting contemporary art galleries. Our last visit was to silversmith Rachel Rowen, who demonstrated some of her techniques and shared her inspirations for her elegant Judaica.

Before I left I took a half day tour of the Old City with Medji Tours. They specialize in dual-narrative tours on Mondays with two guides. Our Israeli guide Yael was from Jerusalem and Noor, who is Palestinian, was from Bethlehem. For four hours we visited historic sites, learned history, and compared sometimes contradictory and complementary narratives. After a week of art, history and reality converged to add depth to my understanding of the country. ■

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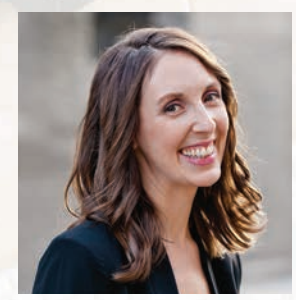

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Mid-Winter Comfort Food

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

We've been through some dark days, both literally and figuratively. While life always has ups and downs, sometimes the downs feel deeper and longer lasting. I'm not just talking about myself but also about others I know, about the state of our country, and the state of the world. At the Hebrew Day School winter music festival in December, I found myself crying during the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner" and "Hatikvah." The concepts of "pride," "freedom," "hope" jumped out at me as I watched graduates of the school lead the crowd in these anthems. The beauty of their voices and the poignancy of the meaning of the songs was overwhelming.

Sometimes we need the kind of comfort that comes from familiar foods. Sometimes the trendy and the exotic don't help but the smells and tastes of home, wherever that home is, are exactly what we need. A friend recently made my family a vegetarian lasagna that should have fed lots of us. I guess I needed a lot of comfort because I ate the vast majority (over a few days, not all at once). Of course, comfort food is in the mind and mouth of each individual.

As I write these words the gloom has not quite lifted, but I have hope. Recently, I asked a number of people about their comfort foods. Many referred to a time they were younger and a relative made something they loved. For them, comfort food is love, family, tradition. Others have newly discovered food that really makes them feel warm and fuzzy inside. Okay, that may be a shot of whiskey, a new food for my husband and me that started when our son, Ari, started distilling.

Most people I asked about their comfort foods mentioned soups: chicken soup, lentil soup, and vegetable soups. Other comfort foods were warm milk, spaghetti and meatballs, kugel, kasha varnishkes, anything their mom made, mac and cheese, and a bowl of cereal. My personal favorite is chocolate pudding, the homemade kind, especially with the skin on top. This is a no judgement zone so whatever comforts *you* fits the category.

Here are some recipes that take a spin on your comfort foods. Spring is on the way. Indulge in something tasty and homey and comforting. ■

Yeminite chicken soup

from *The Foods of Israel Today*, by Joan Nathan

serves 8-10

Not all chicken soup comes from Eastern Europe, but it was the number one food item on my informal survey of comfort foods. Here is the Yemenite version of chicken soup. I wouldn't dare mess with your Mother's soup recipe. Leave off the meat and bones if it's not your thing.

- 8 cups water
- 1 pound slightly fatty beef cut into 2-inch pieces.
- 2 marrow bones
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 large onions, peeled and quartered
- 1 large tomato, quartered but not cut all the way through
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- ¼ cup snipped dill, plus more for garnish
- 1 chicken, cut into 8 pieces (about 3-4 pounds)
- 2 large carrots, peeled and left whole
- 4 celery stalks
- 1 tsp. curry powder
- ½ tsp. cumin
- 1 zucchini, diced in 1-inch pieces
- 3 potatoes, peeled and diced in 1-inch pieces
- 1 TBS hawayij spice (see below)
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 8 cups boiled rice
- 1 cup chopped cilantro (I know, not all of you can eat cilantro)
- 2 TBS z'hug, or to taste (see below)
- 1/3 cup hilbe, or to taste (see below)

Bring water to boil in a large soup pot and the beef and marrow bones, if you are using them. Skim the foam from the surface.

Lower the heat and add the garlic cloves, onion, tomato, parsley and ¼ cup of dill. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes.

Add the chicken pieces. Bring to a boil and skim the surface of the foam. Add the carrot, celery, curry powder and cumin, cover and simmer another 20 minutes or until the chicken pieces are cooked all the way through. You can do this ahead of time and refrigerate overnight.

Remove the marrow bones and the fat that forms on the top of the pot and remove the chicken and beef from the soup. Cut the meat into bite-sized pieces and scrape the skin and bones from the chicken. Return the meat to the soup pot. Dice the cooked celery and carrot and return to the pot.

Add the zucchini, potatoes, hawayij and salt and pepper to taste and simmer, covered, another 10 minutes or until the vegetables are soft. Pour the lemon juice over the soup.

Serve a portion of rice in each soup bowl and top with the chicken, vegetables and broth. Garish with the cilantro or more parsley and dill. Serve the z'hug and hilbe in separate bowls for people to choose.

Yemenite spice blends

Z'hug

Yemenite hot sauce that you could switch out for Tabasco, but it won't be Yemenite

- 4 ounces fresh green serrano or jalapeno peppers, stems removed
- 1 whole head of garlic
- ½ cup cilantro, rinsed and dried
- ½ cup parsley, rinsed and dried
- ¼ tsp. whole black peppercorns
- ¼ cup olive oil and a bit more to cover
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- 2 green cardamom pods, peeled
- 1 tsp salt, or to taste

Place everything in a food processor except the olive oil. Chop until almost pureed and then add the olive oil and puree. Place in glass jar and cover with some more olive oil. Store in refrigerator for up to 3 months.

Hawayij

This can be used to season almost anything

- 2 TBS whole black peppercorns
- 1 TBS. black caraway seeds
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds
- 1 tsp. coriander seeds
- 1 tsp. cardamom seeds
- 2 tsps. turmeric.

Use a spice grinder or coffee grinder to grind all the spices together. Makes about ¼ cup. Store in airtight container.

Hilbe

A Fenugreek Sauce that is very spicy. Some add some chopped tomato to the blend. It's often added to soups. 3 Tbs. fenugreek powder soaked in ½ cup water for about 3 hours. Drain off most of the water but leave enough to have a paste. Beat until smooth. Add a tsp. of z'hug and the juice of a lemon and a bit of salt.

Lentil and Vegetable Stew

Moosewood Restaurant Cooking for Health by the Moosewood collective

Serves 6-8

Here is an alternative to lentil soup which is a bit more filling.

- ½ cup French Green Lentils (or other types)
- 1 bay leaf (optional)
- 1 garlic clove
- 3 cups water
- 2 TBS olive oil
- 1½cups chopped onions
- 3 cups coarsely chopped cabbage or cauliflower
- 1 cup carrots, cut into 1-inch chunks
- ½ tsp. salt
- 3 cups red or yellow bell peppers cut into 1-inch chunks
- 4 cups sliced or quartered mushrooms (cremini or others)
- 1 TBS sweet paprika
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes or ¼ tsp. cayenne
- 1-28 oz. can diced tomatoes
- ¼ cup red wine or sherry
- 2 TBS chopped fresh dill
- Ground pepper to taste

In a small pot bring the lentils covered in water, the bay leaf, if you are using that, and the garlic to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer until the lentils are tender, about 20-30 minutes. Drain the lentils and set aside.

Meanwhile, in a large soup pot on medium heat, warm the olive oil and cook the onions, carrots and salt for about 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Then add the cabbage and bell peppers, cover and cook on medium-low heat for about 10 minutes. Then, add the mushrooms, paprika, rosemary and red pepper flakes and cook for a minute, stirring to prevent the spices from sticking. Add the tomatoes and wine, cover and simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 10 or 15 minutes. Stir in the dill and the cooked lentils. Add more salt and pepper to taste. Top with yogurt, sour cream or crumbled feta.

Rice Custard Pudding

From *My Mother's Kitchen*, by Mimi Sheraton

- 3 extra large eggs
- 4 cups milk
- 2/3 cup sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1¼ tsp vanilla
- 1 generous tsp grated lemon rind
- 1 generous tsp grated orange rind
- ¼ cup raisins or dried currants
- 1 cup cooked rice, room temperature
- Powdered cinnamon or nutmeg to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat the eggs into the milk and strain into a mixing bowl. Add all the remaining ingredients except the cinnamon or nutmeg. Butter an 8-inch glass or ceramic baking dish and turn the pudding mixture into it, smoothing the top so the depth is even.

Place the baking dish in a large pan. Pour in enough hot water to come halfway up the sides of the rice pudding dish. Bake for 30 minutes, then gently stir to make sure the rice is evenly distributed and smooth the top again. Sprinkle the cinnamon or nutmeg on top. Continue baking for another 20 minutes or until the custard has set. Lift the pudding dish from the water bath and let cool.

Chocolate Pudding

from the website //www.spendwithpennies.com

8 servings

- 1-1/3 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/3 cup cornstarch
- Pinch of salt
- 4-1/2 cups milk
- 3-4 Tbs. butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla

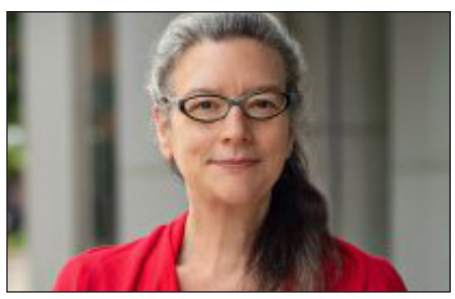
Mix the sugar, cocoa powder, salt and cornstarch in a saucepan. Mix well to avoid lumps. Add in cold milk and whisk until combined.

Increase the heat to medium, stir constantly until the mixture reaches a boil. Allow the mixture to boil for 1 minute while stirring constantly. Remove from heat, stir in butter and vanilla. Let mixture cool while stirring occasionally to keep the pudding smooth. Store in the refrigerator.

Do Yiddish and vegetarianism go together? An interview with Eve Jochnowitz

By Lonnie Sussman

Two years ago, I wrote an article about cookbooks and included a paragraph and a recipe from *The Vilna Vegetarian Cookbook*, by Fania Lewando, translated by



Eve Jochnowitz

Eve Jochnowitz. The cookbook is a remarkable tribute to a woman, to a time, to a place, and to a moment in Jewish history. It was originally published in Vilna in 1938. At that time Vilna was a part of Poland; Germany was about to unleash the horror of World War II and the vast majority of the Jews of Lithuania as well as the six million in other parts of Europe were about to be murdered. Fania Lewando was, according to the dedication of this translated book, "a pioneering thinker and cook and a passionate educator, who devoted her life to promoting health and vitality." Her cookbook is inspirational and heartbreaking at the same time. Fania, her husband, and most of the people who attended the cooking classes or who ate at the restaurant were dead within the next few years.

The translator of *The Vilna Vegetarian Cookbook*, Eve Jochnowitz is a Fellow at the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan this year. We recently had a conversation about the book, her work in the field of Yiddish and Jewish food, and other topics. Dr. Jochnowitz is a Yiddish instructor at YIVO Institute and the Worker's Circle and has been teaching Yiddish language, culture and literature, as well as Yiddish foodways and dance for 25 years. She earned her PhD in Jewish culinary ethnography from New York University.

Dr. Jochnowitz is studying Yiddish speakers and vegetarianism during her stay at the Frankel Center. She has been looking at a variety of printed materials including the Yiddish press. In the first half of the Twentieth century in North America the Yiddish papers were mostly progressive, liberal and often secular.

Perhaps surprising to our contemporary sensibilities, the Yiddish press had an angry reaction to vegetarianism. The press editors were very concerned with Yiddish culture including food traditions. Dr. Jochnowitz explained to me that vegetarianism was seen as anti-tradition, an assault on the culture. They were also opposed to the popularity of Jews going to Chinese restaurants. One article in a Yiddish paper was titled "The War Between Chop Suey and Gefilte Fish."

At the same time, vegetarianism has had a Jewish connection from the beginning. Literally, the Book of B'reishit speaks of the food available before the Flood as plant based, only after the Flood meat eating was permitted. Dr. Jochnowitz pointed out that Yiddish speaking vegetarians were found all over Europe and were especially connected to culinary and political movements in the early part of the Twentieth century. She is researching the vegetarian Yiddish speakers of North America from that time.

Jews adapted the available foods of the nearby cuisines in every area they lived. So, what made eastern European Jewish recipes different from their neighbors? According to Dr. Jochnowitz, there are at least two major differences. The first was how foods were prepared with onions and garlic as a common flavor enhancer.

The context in which the foods were used was another difference. For example, blintzes were everyday foods in Polish homes while they were connected to the holiday of Shavuot in Jewish cuisine. Another example was borscht. It was a regular dish for Poles but became connected to Pesach for the Jews. A third and very interesting example, was cabbage rolls. For the Jewish homes they became connected to Hoshanna Rabba, the seventh day of Sukkot. The Yiddish word "kroyt" meant "cabbage" but in some regions it was "kohl" which sounds like the Hebrew word for "voice." One prayer recited on Hoshanna Rabba has the line "Kol Mevaser/a voice proclaimed," which could be re-interpreted as "cabbage cooked with water." Creative, yes? I look forward to reading the paper or book Dr. Jochnowitz' research produces.

Recipes from The Vilna Vegetarian Cookbook

Buckwheat Pudding

(Riestainis in Lithuanian and Prazucha in Polish. In Yiddish this is Kasha)

You will notice that the instructions leave out some details. How hot an oven? Probably about 400 to 425 degrees. How many servings? Maybe 4? This is typical in the cookbook and offers us some more insight into the personality of Fania Lewando.

Brown 1-1/2 cups buckwheat flour with ½ cup fine semolina in a pan. Pour into a bowl and add salt, 1 tablespoon sugar and some cinnamon. Pour on enough hot water to make a soft batter. Saute' 1 grated onion in 1 cup of melted butter and mix into the batter. Grease a pan with vegetable oil, sprinkle with breadcrumbs and pour in the batter. Bake in a hot oven for 1 hour.

Chickpea Cutlets:

This is one of twelve cutlet recipes using vegetables, nuts, beans and grain. All use a similar method. Some include chopped onions in the mix.

After soaking them overnight, cook 3 cups dried chickpeas until soft. Push them through a food mill, or puree in a food processor. Add 3 raw eggs, some salt, 4 tablespoons breadcrumbs, and 3 tablespoons melted butter. Shape into cutlets, dip in breadcrumbs, and fry in butter until brown. You may also serve some boiled, thinly sliced potatoes along with these. ■

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Child-inspired integrated learning at HDS

Jennifer Rosenberg, special to the WJN

Let's make it a restaurant!" exclaimed five-year-old Seth. "A pizza restaurant!" squealed Lilah, eyeing the plastic pizza slices sitting on the table in the dramatic play area in the far corner of the classroom. Excitement started to build slowly in the Hebrew Day School kindergarten classroom. Considering the space, two friends brainstormed ways they might separate the kitchen from where the diners would eat. Even more children joined, and the group began to enthusiastically suggest menu items and furniture. Peering over a dry erase board, one student carefully documented the growing list of items they would need, spelling them in the ways kindergarteners do: cheez, saus, doh, sald, oter food, tabls, chrs. Pretty soon, the whole class was in on the plan.

"As we probed deeper into our restaurant design, the opportunities to authentically address a wide range of content and skills seamlessly presented themselves." says general studies teacher, Debbie Carbone. "A child-centered pizza restaurant served as the catalyst for a rich and integrated unit that eventually turned into a perfect opportunity to teach the students about providing for others." Indeed, the unit incorporated reading, writing, language acquisition, science, and math. It also provided opportunities to explore Jewish values, *brachot* (blessings), and healthy food choices, and to expand students' Hebrew vocabulary. This type of rich, developmentally appropriate, integrated unit, in which content

cues and inspiration are taken from the children, is a hallmark of the educational philosophy in the HDS *Gan* (kindergarten). It inspires students and teachers alike.

The pizza restaurant motivated a field trip to a local grocery store where students learned about healthy food choices, access to food resources, and recycling. The kindergarteners easily made the connection between the Jewish value of *shmirat hateva* (protecting nature) and the store's recycling program. They also learned about the great importance of reducing and reusing, which they now understand are the steps before recycling.

Back at school, the students learned about the life cycles of various fruits and grains and explored the concept of food traveling from farm to table. They learned which blessings we say before eating and how different foods grow. The pizza restaurant came alive again with new Hebrew vocabulary that was a natural and integral aspect of this learning. The students' reading and writing were incorporated through labeling items and designing restaurant menus, in both Hebrew and English.

All of this learning came together with the capstone activity–another field trip–this one to the Back Door Food Pantry to deliver food for those in need. A grant from Kroger enabled the students to purchase the food to donate, but before they did, there was work to be done. They examined transit maps to plot their route on the city bus. The children sorted, counted, and used the canned foods to practice their math skills. And they contemplated their work as an exercise in *tikkun olam* (mending the world). Milka Eliav, the *Gan* Hebrew and Judaic Studies teacher, was thrilled to expose her students to such a meaningful project. She says, "Helping out in the local community is one step towards mending the world. Also, when students work together as a team, it brings these notions right back into our own *Gan* community and makes us better friends and helpers to each other." Providing young children with meaningful, real world experiences sets a foundation upon which they will build for a lifetime.

"Building a pizza restaurant in our classroom sparked logical and creative thinking, inspired collaboration among peers, and encouraged our students to construct and expand their understanding of the world around them," reflects Carbone. "A little imagination and some plastic food (specifically pizza!)," she continues, "led us on a fruitful path of learning that embraced play, student participation, and the tenets of *tikkun olam*." ■

ums
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Michael Barenboim, music director and violin

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PROGRAM

Brahms	String Sextet No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 18
Tartini	Devil's Trill Sonata in g minor for Solo Violin
Benjamin Attahir	Jawb
Mendelssohn	String Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20

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Looking for Rose: memory and history

By Clare Kinberg, second installment in a series

For forty years, beginning in 1975, I unsuccessfully tried to find my father's sister, an aunt I'd never met. I grew up in St. Louis, in an Ashkenazi Jewish family I thought was completely segregated from African American families. But the separation was a lie.

I now know that sometime in the late 1930s my aunt Rose moved to Chicago with her African American husband. Her young son Joey remained behind with her mother and siblings. One day in 2016, I found Rose's death certificate on the internet. She had died at the age of 76 in a hospital in South Bend, Indiana. Her last residential address was in Vandalia, Michigan, about two hours from my own home in Ypsilanti.

Finally, knowing Rose's married name as it was listed on the death certificate, I could investigate the outlines of her adult life through census documents. In the late 1930s, she lived in strictly segregated Chicago with her husband, Mr. Arnwine. Though Ashkenazi Jewish, with birth parents from Russia and Romania, Rose is listed as Negro on the 1940 census, as is everyone in her building, her block, and the surrounding neighborhood on South Michigan Avenue.

Rose and Mr. Arnwine lived about three blocks from where Lorraine Hansberry's family lived before they bought the house in the strictly white neighborhood at the south end of Washington Park where they were attacked with bricks. The year Aunt Rose and Mr. Arnwine lived in Chicago, the Supreme Court settled in favor of the Hansberrys, but the court did not make restrictive covenants, deeds containing language that enforces racial segregation, illegal.

Lorraine Hansberry turned her family's experience into the play "A Raisin in the Sun." Aunt Rose and Mr. Arnwine moved on. From Chicago they moved to the resort town of Benton Harbor, Michigan and then in 1943, Mr. Arnwine and two other men from their Chicago neighborhood bought 25 acres of land in southwest Michigan on a lake outside of Vandalia. After close to twenty years together, Rose and Mr. Arnwine divorced in 1957 and had no children together. Rose lived on the shore of Paradise Lake near Vandalia for the rest of her life.

Seeing Rose's death certificate, I felt a flood of regret that I hadn't found her while she was still alive. I became determined to find her burial place. I was awash with wonder at the coincidence of her closeness to me in Ypsilanti.

My wife is descended from enslaved Black women and their white owners and our adopted daughters were born of Black women in the United States. For me, being in an interracial family has meant navigating persistent racial segregation and living intimately with the effects of racism on those most close to my heart. I am conscious of race in every interaction I have. Like a woman walking alone at night considers her safety, like a Jew reads the daily news with an eye to implications of antisemitism, awareness of race is always there. But I often don't know what to do with my awareness, whether to clench keys in my fist, ready for a powerful defensive punch, or pack my bags for the long-planned escape. I didn't grow up with the tools to deal with anti-Black racism. But for that racism, I might have grown up knowing the Arnwines as *ma-*

chatunim (Yiddish for the in-laws' family) and perhaps have been exposed to the skills I am acquiring as an adult.

I began my search for Rose and Mr. Arnwine's lives with questions I knew would defy answers. Without talking directly to them, how could I find out why they bought land in Vandalia? Why did she stay? How did she feel about her decisions? Would she have wanted to meet me?

Even if I could interview them, their answers to my questions about their choices to make a life together and settle in Vandalia would have depended on their mood, how much they trusted me, or even the time of day. Their memories of reasons for buying 25 acres of land in 1943, far away from any city, would certainly have altered as they aged. Yet, even with the fickleness of memory, I mourn the loss of their stories: For a historian, memories are imprecise and of questionable value; but for a storyteller, every memory conveys significant meaning.

I love history, but in the back of my mind the refrain keeps playing that in Jewish tradition, memory is more important than history. According to the stories Jews tell, when the Israelites returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile (538 B.C.E), the scribe Ezra cobbled together various manuscripts of the Israelites' origins and redemption from slavery. Stories that might have been memories; stories that certainly created memories. The stories were gathered into one scroll, the written Torah, which was copied many times over to be read out loud in gatherings. This is the origin of Jews reading sections of the Torah each week in synagogue, completing a full reading of the "Five Books of Moses" each year.

After an emphatic explanation of the work of the scribe Ezra and Jewish life thousands of years ago, the author Joel Lurie Grishaver writes in *Talmud with Training Wheels* it doesn't really matter to Jews if Ezra was a real person or if the story of return from the Babylonian exile is historically accurate. Only our memory of these people and events matters, he says.

I struggle to understand the implications of this distinction between history and memory, even though I have turned these ideas over and over for decades. The historian YH Yerushalmi explains in his widely-read book *Zakhor*: *Jewish History and Jewish Memory* that memory structures the stories Jews tell about ourselves. Historians gather facts, he writes, and then interpret what they mean. However, with memory, the meaning of the story precedes and determines the events related.

When my wife Patti and I decided to move to Michigan from Oregon in 2003, we had searched long and intensively for a place we wanted to raise our African American daughters. Oregon, where our family was an attention-grabbing oddity and the girls were often not seen beyond the color of their skin, was not the place. When our oldest was still an infant in arms, I took her on an errand to the local supermarket. As we were walking across the parking lot returning to the car, a young white guy, from two rows away yelled to catch my attention, "Did you just get that from Africa?" In pure Oregon style, he added something like, "That's really beautiful, man." I was still vulnerable enough as a brand-new parent to start to answer him, my mouth opened and closed before the knife-point of his racism reached bone.

Patti and I began our search for lists of "best cities for interracial families," and fit these into our other criteria: affordable and friendly to lesbian families. The affordable part nixed all of California and many large cities. We'd never lived in the South and were reluctant to search there. We took a road trip to Evanston, Illinois; Yellow Springs, Ohio; Montclair, New Jersey; Mount Airy, Pennsylvania; and Ann Arbor. Patti got a scholarship to attend graduate school at the University of Michigan, which finally made the decision for us.

Unbeknownst to me, my aunt Rose had moved to Michigan sixty years earlier. She settled in Vandalia in 1943 when she was 35 years old. Looking at her decisions through the lens of my own life, I assume Rose and Mr. Arnwine were looking for a place where an interracial couple could live safely. Patti and I have spent so much time analyzing the demographics of places where we might live, thinking about the Black and Jewish, interracial and lesbian communities our family would call our own. My life shapes the conversations I wish I could have had with Aunt Rose, and my telling of her story, the questions I want her life to help me answer. ■

My experience as a black woman in Israeli society

By Chava Reichman

Translated from the Hebrew by Teddy Weisberger: I have been writing my bi-weekly column on life in Israel since 1998, beginning with the Omaha Jewish Press (my wife is a native Omahan), and then self-syndicating to a few more papers three years later. Before making aliyah in 1997 with my wife and five small children, I was an assistant professor of religious studies at Florida International University in Miami. My "day job" today is as writer and editor of academic articles for Ono Academic College in Israel. When we made aliyah to Givat Ze'ev in 1997, Katriel and Naomi Reichman were crucial to our successful absorption, and their daughter Chava became best friends with our daughter Ruthie. It is with great pleasure that I present (in translation) Chava's words here, in honor of Martin Luther King Day.

I was born in Israel and was adopted when I was about two months old by "light skinned" American-born parents. I grew up in a small community in a kind of warm and friendly bubble: family, friends, acquaintances from the neighborhood, everyone knowing my family and my story. So sometimes I was called blacky, or sambo blacky, but it's kids--everyone goes through some sort of teasing in childhood, so everything's fine. Over the years, there came other voices, looks, and behavior regarding my skin color that left me with little room for confusion concerning my belonging to a specific "group."

I think that when people see a black person they put them in some sort of slot, and to me that's where the problem starts. I am indeed a black woman but I didn't really grow up in any kind of African culture; so I'm not really African and yet people put me into a slot. Why? Because of my skin color.

A few years ago a friend suggested that I go out with a guy. She told me a little about him, gave me some details, and I decided to go for it and try. She contacted him and told him a little about me; he was interested. Before they ended their call, he asked about my family background and she told him that I was dark skinned, and at the last minute he decided that he was not interested. I don't know what his reasons were and I didn't give this much attention, but surely skin color was decisive here.

A friend and I went to the bathroom at a mall a few years ago, and while I'm waiting outside the cleaning woman (who happened to be light skinned) turned to me and without hesitating suggested that I talk to her manager for a job as a restroom cleaner at the mall. I am inclined to believe that her intentions were good, but her generalizing and associating me as a black woman with some group or social class is a problem.

There is a story my family loves me to tell because the end result was in my favor. One evening as I was driving home, I went through an intersection that apparently had a stop sign. Suddenly there was a police car behind me and I got pulled over. The policeman asked for my license and registration and returned to the police car. Meanwhile I'm waiting in my own car, feeling very disappointed. When the policeman returned, he told me he had to give me a significant

Continued on page 27

Calendar

February 2020

Saturday 1

Shabbat services: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Torah Study: TBE. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Genesis Concert Series: TBE Sanctuary. Featuring the brightest young artists on the brink of their professional careers in music, with the adult choirs of TBE and St. Clare's. 7 p.m

Sunday 2

World Wide Wrap: BIC. About the time two NFL football teams begin wrapping athletic tape in preparation for the Super Bowl, Conservative Jews around the world – and at Beth Israel - will be wrapping themselves in tefillin for World Wide Wrap. Everyone is invited (post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah aged) to join us for this meaningful morning. Lessons will be followed by a short shacharit service, the annual polar bear picture, and bagels and lox. 9:30 a.m.

How to talk to Jewish kids about race. JCC. Bend the Arc Ann Arbor presents a discussion and hands on training about how to engage Jewish children in conversations about race. Space is limited. A $10 registration fee is required to secure your spot. 1-3 p.m.

Illuminated Calligraphy Workshop: Women of TBE. With Marianne Aaron Part 1: The first session will teach the basics of calligraphy and the second will concentrate on writing a prayer, poem, psalm etc, with illumination. $18 fee includes the cost of all materials and refreshments. RSVP and pay here: https://wtbe.org/whats-happening/2019-2020-programs/caligraphy/, or email Trina Fuller, tfuller817@gmail.com, to RSVP and pay at the door. 1-4 p.m.

Intro to Judaism: BIC. Though directed at people who are considering conversion, this serious examination of the main dimensions of Judaism --from mysticism to Talmud to Jewish Holidays and rituals – is open to anyone who wants to deepen their Jewish literacy. This course is open to members and non-members. 2 p.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. 11a.m. to noon.

Monday 3

Caring For You, Caring For Me: JFS. To educate and support professional and family caregivers in a relaxed setting. Facilitated by a licensed master social worker at Retirement Income Solutions, 2301 Platt Rd. Contact Roberta Hirshon, 734.769.0209 ext 374. 4- 6 p.m.

Traditions Entwined: Writing Judeo-Persian Poetry in Fourteenth-Century Iran: Frankel Center, Room 2022, 202 S. Thayer St. Julia Rubanovich, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem will look into several episodes from the Bereshit-nama with an aim to explore Shahin's (fl. in the first part of the 14th century) retelling of the Biblical story from a comparative angle, vis-à-vis both Jewish and Muslim exegetical sources. 4 pm

Fiber Arts with Women of TBE 7-8:30 p.m.

Tuesday 4

From Cairo to the Cloud: The World of the Cairo Geniza. Frankel Center. A Documentary Film by Michelle Paymar. The Cairo Geniza archive has been digitally reunited in the "cloud," freely accessible online to everyone, everywhere. Professor Ryan Szpiech will provide a historical background about the Geniza, discuss the film with the filmmaker, and answer questions from the audience. Rackham Amphitheater, 915 E. Washington St. 4 pm

Tea and Torah on Tuesday—for Women: Chabad. Reading the Torah may be easy, but understanding it is no simple matter. Study of the text with the classical Rashi commentary. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 5

Judaism's Gifts to the World: Chabad House. A six-session course by the acclaimed Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), unearthing the Jewish roots of some of the most cherished values of Western civilization. 9 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Yidish tish Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): JCC, Conference Room. Combines the long-time JCC Yiddish reading group and the former UM conversational one, about 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all who are interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture; level of proficiency and age of no consequence. For more information or to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please e-mail Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu or call Lily Ladin at (734) 662-6613 at least one day before scheduled meeting day. 10:30 a.m. -- 12 noon.

Theology Book Club: BIC - GSAC 2010 Lower Level. Join the Theology Book Club to read and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. 8 p.m.

Thursday 6

Jewish Meditation with Linda Greene: TBE. 1-2 p.m.,

Back Door Food Pantry: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Wine & Cheese Tasting: Women's Philanthropy of Federation. at York (1928 Packard St Ann Arbor MI 48103): Registration fee: $36. Please register at www.jewishannarbor.org/wine&cheese20. 7 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. Sharpen your wits and knowledge of the Jewish legal system by following the intriguing discussions in the Talmud. The Talmud is a composite of practical law, logical argumentation and moral teachings. Study from the original Talmud tractate. 8 p.m.

Friday 7

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Adult Lounge. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Sessions are open to the entire community. Feel free to bring your lunch. Noon–1 p.m.

Families with Young Children (FYC) Tot Shabbat Service: TBE. All of your favorite songs led by TBE's tot team, Cantor Hayut and Rabbi Whinston. Join us for macaroni and cheese, fish sticks, applesauce, and a salad bar immediately following the short service. Dinner is just $5 per person. Buy a punch card ahead of time for a discounted price. Punch cards are available in the TBE office. 5:45 p.m. 0-5yrs, 6:15 dinner, 6:45 Shira Service.

First Friday: JCS. Secular readings, songs, candle lighting, wine, and challah. Dinner and Jewish Jeopardy will follow the short observance. Children are welcome. The cost of dinner is $10/person or $25/family. At the JCC, 6:30 p.m.

Friday evening services: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Saturday 8

Shabbat services: *See listing at the end of the calendar.*

Torah Study: TBE. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Shabbat Limmud: BIC. Held before Shabbat morning services by Rabbi Robert Dobrusin, this session will offer a lively discussion on Parashat Ha-Shavua, the Torah portion of the week and other traditional texts. We invite you to join us in the library for Torah study over coffee and cake! 9 a.m.

Ta'Shma Come and Learn: AARC. Before each Second Saturday Shabbat morning service, Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner leads an educational discussion about a relevant topic. At the JCC of Ann Arbor, 10 - 10:30am

Tot Shabbat: BIC. This special Shabbat morning program is for preschoolers and their parents with songs, stories, prayers, and the Shabbat "Mystery Box." 11:15 a.m.

Sunday 9 Erev Tu B'Shvat

TBE Families Monthly Meet-Up: Offsite. 10a.m.-Noon.

Book Group: AARC. *The History of Love* by Nicole Kraus. This book was suggested by Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner, and she will lead the discussion. Event will be held at the home of Greg Saltzman and Audrey Newell. For address and further details, please RSVP to Greg at gsaltzman@albion.edu, 10a.m. to noon.

Tu B'Shvat with Black Diesel: BIC. Explore the coffee tree with local Black Diesel Coffee proprietor Nick Ferris and Beth Israel's own barista, Rav Nadav. Learn about how Black Diesel works directly with small farms, roast coffee with Rav Nadav, enjoy a fresh cuppa and some light refreshments. 1 – 2:30 p.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. 11a.m. noon.

Illuminated Calligraphy Workshop: Women of TBE. With Marianne Aaron Part 2: 1-4 p.m.

Tu B'shvat Seder: Chabad. The Holiday of Jewish Arbor day in Ann Arbor, featuring a full Tu B'Shvat Seder of the special foods and drinks from Israel, study session on the meaning of the day, and the Jewish prospective on ecology. 8:00 p.m.

Monday 10 Tu B'Shvat

WTBE Historical Novel Reading Group: TBE. This month's read is *Shanghai Girls* by Lisa See. 12:30–2:30 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. An in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion led by Cantor Regina Hayut. The group will explore various passages from the portion looking at several translations and commentaries from a variety of scholars from Talmudic times to the modern day. No Hebrew knowledge necessary to participate in the discussion. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7–9 p.m.

Tuesday 11

What Ifs of Jewish History: Frankel Center. Gavriel Rosenfeld, Fairfield University in conversation with Devi Mays and Jeff Veidlinger, University of Michigan. What if the Jews of Spain had not been expelled in 1492? What if Adolf Hitler had been assassinated in 1939? What if a Jewish state had been established in Uganda instead of Palestine? In his talk, Gavriel D. Rosenfeld discusses how these and other counterfactual questions would have affected the course of Jewish history. Room 2022, 202 S. Thayer St. 4 pm

Tea and Torah on Tuesday—for Women: Chabad. Reading the Torah may be easy, but understanding it is no simple matter. Study of the text with the classical Rashi commentary. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 12

Judaism's Gifts to the World: Chabad House. A six-session course by the acclaimed Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), unearthing the Jewish roots of some of the most cherished values of Western civilization. 9 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Yidish tish (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): JCC, Conference Room. For more information or to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please e-mail Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu or call Lily Ladin at (734) 662-6613 at least one day before scheduled meeting day. 10:30 a.m. -- 12 noon.

Theology Book Club: BIC - GSAC 2010 Lower Level. Join the Theology Book Club to read and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. 8 p.m.

Thursday 13

Jewish Meditation with Linda Greene: TBE. 1-2 p.m.,

Back Door Food Pantry: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. See first Thursday of month for details. 8 p.m..

Friday 14

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Adult Lounge. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Sessions are open to the entire community. Feel free to bring your lunch. Noon–1 p.m.

Speed Friending Shabbat: JYP & jUnion. Second-Friday-of-the-month Shabbat dinner gathering with JYP and jUnion! This month, we'll host speed-friending over dinner. Come alone or bring a friend, we provide the rest. Service and dinner at Michigan Hillel, moving to Arbor Brewing Company about 9 p.m. 114 E Washington St. Questions, contact Jessica Weil jessica@jewishannarbor.org. 5:15 – 10 p.m.

Tot Shabbat: TBE. Tot Shabbat (0-5yrs) from 5:45–6:15 p.m.

Friday evening services: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Saturday 15

Torah Study: TBE. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50 – 9:50 a.m.

Applied Prayer Session (formerly Learner's Shabbat): BIC. Rav Nadav is leading alternative Saturday morning service experiences from 9:30 to 10:15 am, at which time we'll move upstairs to join the main service. During this time we focus on a single prayer. We learn the meanings of the prayer, practice it, and then deepen our davening through meditation or healing. 9:30 – 10:15 a.m.

Parent's Night Out: BIC. Drop off your children (ages 5-15 years old) at the synagogue and enjoy an evening to yourselves. Children will be served dinner and there will be a movie playing along with some crafts. Cost for members is $10 for the first child and $8 for each additional; non-members are an additional $5 per child. Contact Amanda at engage@bethisrael-aa.org for more info or to sign up.6 – 9 p.m.

Quiz Night: BIC. This 13th annual Beth Israel Quiz Night promises to be another fun competitive evening for adults. The social program is a team based multi-media trivia game. Whether one comes with their own team or forms one at the game, participants are sure to have a great time as they work together to answer trivia questions, decipher puzzles, and complete other challenges in order to earn the title of Beth Israel's Trivia Masters. The cost is $10 per person. Register online by using the link on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). 7 – 9 p.m.

Shabbat services: *See listing at the end of the calendar.*

Sunday 16

Foundations of Jewish Family Living: AAOM and PJ Library. Monthly at the JCC. 10 a.m.

Aliyah & Rescue Missions to Israel with Vicki Angel: JCC. Light brunch, Vicki Angel formerly of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). She will be sharing stories from her time rescuing Jews from around the world. To RSVP for the event, please email events@jewishannarbor.org. 10 am. – noon.

Mitzvah Day: BIC. Mitzvah Day is Beth Israel's day of giving. The congregation will support food collection for Alpha House (stay tuned for more info). BIRS Middle School students and their families will prepare and serve meals at Alpha House. For more information and to get involved, please contact Amanda at engage@bethisrael-aa.org. 11 a.m.

Intro to Judaism: BIC. Though directed at people who are considering conversion, this serious examination of the main dimensions of Judaism

Yidish tish יידיש שיט (Yiddish Conversation

--from mysticism to Talmud to Jewish Holidays and rituals – is open to anyone who wants to deepen their Jewish literacy. This course is open to members and non-members. 2 p.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. 11a.m.- noon.

Monday 17

Tuesday 18

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m. *See first Tuesday of month.*

Wednesday 19

Judaism's Gifts to the World: Chabad House. A six-session course by the acclaimed Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), unearthing the Jewish roots of some of the most cherished values of Western civilization. 9 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Yidish tish (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): JCC, Conference Room. For more information or to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please e-mail Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu or call Lily Ladin at (734) 662-6613 at least one day before scheduled meeting day. 10:30 a.m. -- 12 noon.

Theology Book Club: BIC - GSAC 2010 Lower Level. Join the Theology Book Club to read and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. 8 p.m.

Thursday 20

Does Time Stop in the World of Talmud Torah? Frankel Center. Jonathan Boyarin, Cornell University, in conversation with Jack Kugelmass. Longtime Lower East Side resident and veteran anthropologist Jonathan Boyarin will present his autoethnography of study at the neighborhood's last yeshiva. His paper will focus on the qualities of time in a world where, as his brother Daniel Boyarin once wrote, "A question asked in the sixteenth century can be answered in the twelfth." With a response by Boyarin's mentor and longtime collaborator Jack Kugelmass. Room 2022, 202 S. Thayer St.1 pm

Jewish Meditation with Linda Greene: TBE. 1-2 p.m.,

Back Door Food Pantry: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Brotherhood Guys' Night Out: TBE, Offsite. 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. See first Thursday of month for details. 8 p.m..

Friday 21

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Adult Lounge. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Sessions are open to the entire community. Feel free to bring your lunch. Noon–1 p.m.

Tot Shabbat Tastes Ann Abor: TBE. 6:15-6:45p.m.

Friday evening services: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Saturday 22

Torah Study: TBE. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50 – 9:50 a.m.

Tot Shabbat: BIC. This special Shabbat morning program is for preschoolers and their parents with songs, stories, prayers, and the Shabbat "Mystery Box." 11:15 a.m.

Sunday 23

Taste of Gan: HDS. Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor event for preschoolers and their family, at the JCC. Contact Esther Jakar office@hdsaa.org. 10 a.m.

Volunteer Appreciation Brunch: BIC. Please join all past, present, and future BIC volunteers for a delicious brunch as well as a short educational program on the 2020 census. The brunch is free, but RSVPs are requested. Please contact the Beth Israel office by Monday, February 17, at office@bethisrael-aa.org. This program is sponsored by the Social Action Committee. 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11a.m.- noon.**

Michigan Democratic Jewish Caucus Kickoff. With Debbie Dingell. 3-5p.m.

What's So Funny About Israel? BIC. Benji Lovitt, comedian, educator, and writer, comes to Beth Israel and helps us use humor and laughter to narrow the gap between our understanding of Israel and our understanding of ourselves as American Jews. Sponsored by the Israel Center at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. For more information, please contact Amanda at engage@bethisrael-aa.org. 4 – 5:30 p.m.

Monday 24

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle and Women's Torah Study: TBE. First monthly Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle combines on this date with the ongoing Women's Torah Study led by Cantor Hayut. Socializing at 6:30 pm before the circle begins. Contact Trina Fuller, tfuller817@gmail.com, or Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7–8:30p.m

Tuesday 25, Rosh Hodesh Adar

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m. *See first Tuesday of month.*

Wednesday 26, Rosh Hodesh Adar

Judaism's Gifts to the World: Chabad House. A six-session course by the acclaimed Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), unearthing the Jewish roots of some of the most cherished values of Western civilization. 9 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Yidish tish (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): JCC, Conference Room. For more information or to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please e-mail Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu or call Lily Ladin at (734) 662-6613 at least one day before scheduled meeting day. 10:30 a.m. -- 12 noon.

Theology Book Club: BIC - GSAC 2010 Lower Level. Join the Theology Book Club to read and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. 8 p.m.

Thursday 27

Work in Progress Screening & Discussion: (Ver Vet Blaybn?) Who Will Remain?: Frankel Center. Christa Whitney, Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project, will present a work-in-progress version of Ver Vet Blaybn? Who Will Remain?, an hour-long documentary following Israeli actress Hadas Kalderon as she retraces the extraordinary life journey of her grandfather, the renowned Yiddish writer Avrom Sutzkever. Drawing on archival footage, never-before-seen home videos, and interviews from the Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project, Ver Vet Blaybn? Who Will Remain? is a personal and poetic tribute to one of our greatest and most courageous Yiddish writers. 2022 202 S. Thayer, 1-2:30 p.m.

Jewish Meditation with Linda Greene: TBE. 1-2 p.m.,

Back Door Food Pantry: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. See first Thursday of month for details. 8 p.m..

Friday 28

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Adult Lounge. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Sessions are open to the entire community. Feel free to bring your lunch. Noon–1 p.m.

Guitar-led Shabbat Service: TBE. Sanctuary 6:30–8 p.m.

Friday evening services: See listing at the end of the calendar.

Saturday 29

Torah Study: TBE. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50 – 9:50 a.m.

Shabbat Limmud: BIC. Held before Shabbat morning services by Rabbi Robert Dobrusin, this session will offer a lively discussion on Parashat HaShavua, the Torah portion of the week and other traditional texts. We invite you to join us in the library for Torah study over coffee and cake! 9 a.m.

Weekly Friday night Shabbat services

Shabbat Service: AAOM. Services held at UM Hillel at candle lighting. Contact rabbi@annarborminyan.org to confirm time.

Shabbat Service: BIC. 6 p.m.

Shabbat Service: TBE. Tot Shabbat at 6 p.m., followed by tot dinner. Traditional Service at 7:30 p.m. Once a month Middle School Service at 7:30 p.m. For information, call (734) 665-4744.

Shabbat Service: AARC. Every fourth Friday at the JCC. Tot Shabbat from 5:45–6:15 p.m. Pizza for the little ones at 6:15 p.m. Service at 6:30 p.m., followed by vegetarian potluck at 8 p.m. Childcare during service. All are welcome to attend. For information, email info@aarecon.org, phone (734) 445-1910, or visit www.aarecon.org.

Shabbat Service: Chabad. Begins at candle lighting time. Home hospitality available for Shabbat meals and Jewish holidays. Call (734) 995-3276 in advance.

Weekly Shabbat services

Shabbat Services: AAOM. Morning service at UM Hillel, 9:30 a.m. Home Hospitality for Shabbat and Holiday Meals: Contact: welcome@annarborminyan.org.

Shabbat Services: BIC. 9:30 a.m. For other service times, visit www.bethisrael-aa.org.

Shabbat Services: AARC. Second Saturday of each month at the JCC. 10 a.m. Ta-Shma/Come and Learn. Service begins at 10:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Service, Meditation, prayer, discussion, community. All are welcome! At the JCC of Ann Arbor, 10:30a.m. to noon. For information, email info@aarecon.org, phone (734) 445-1910, or visit www.aarecon.org.

Shabbat Services: Chabad. Friday night services at Shabbat candle lighting time. Saturday morning services at 9:45 a.m. Afternoon Mincha services 45 minutes before sundown. Call (734) 995-3276 for Home Hospitality and Meals for Shabbat and Jewish Holidays.

Shabbat Services: Pardes Hannah. Generally meets the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month. Call (734) 663-4039 for more information. 10 a.m. Led by Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg.

Shabbat Services: TBE. Torah Study at 8:50 a.m. Morning Minyan with Rabbi Josh Whinston and Cantor Regina Lambert-Hayut at 9:30 a.m. Sanctuary Service at 10 a.m. most weeks. Call the office at (734) 665-4744 or consult website at www.templebethemeth.org for service details.

Home Hospitality and Meals: Chabad. Every Shabbat and Holiday. Call (734) 995-3276 in advance.

Phone numbers and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM)
1429 Hill Street 248-408-3269
Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC)
2935 Birch Hollow Drive 913-9705
Beth Israel Congregation (BIC)
2000 Washtenaw Ave. 665-9897
Chabad House
715 Hill Street 995-3276
Jewish Community Center (JCC)
2935 Birch Hollow Drive 971-0990
Jewish Cultural Society (JCS)
2935 Birch Hollow Drive 975-9872
Jewish Family Services (JFS)
2245 South State Street 769-0209
Jewish Federation
2939 Birch Hollow Drive 677-0100
Pardes Hannah
2010 Washtenaw Ave. 761-5324
Temple Beth Emeth (TBE)
2309 Packard Road 665-4744
UM Hillel
1429 Hill Street 769-0500

My experience as a black woman continued from page 25

ticket but he would waive it on condition that I tell him how I got my Ashkenazi family name. Of course I told him, and luckily I was saved from a ticket. I was happy that finally my story and my skin color were in my favor.

I was working as one of the cashiers at a store a few years ago and there was a long line. A customer was impatient and asked that we hurry up, adding "You blacks: Who brought you here? Go back to where you came from." It's sad to think that people look upon blacks as a group that doesn't belong here, as a group set apart. And again, color is decisive.

There have been more than a few such stories in my life, whether at work, in dating, in different interactions, or just with people who are very surprised to see me with my family.

There are many types of racism and they are not absent from the State of Israel. But there is something about color and my visual appearance as a black woman that is especially significant. It is a feature that cannot be ignored. Many things can be hidden or blurred when you are "different," but when you are black you are black and people see the difference. The experience of the difference as a black person is not simple. There is always the feeling that I am different, that I am different from the rest of society. If I compare my values, my contribution to society, my life to a white person's life, we are similar. But when put to the test, in Israeli society we are different.

Translated by Teddy Weisberger: I have been writing my bi-weekly column on life in Israel since 1998, beginning with the *Omaha Jewish Press* (my wife is a native Omahan), and then self-syndicating to a few more papers three years later. Before making *aliyah* in 1997 with my wife and five small children, I was an assistant professor of religious studies at Florida International University in Miami. My "day job" today is as writer and editor of academic articles for Ono Academic College in Israel. When we made aliyah to Givat Ze'ev in 1997, Katriel and Naomi Reichman were crucial to our successful absorption, and their daughter Chava became best friends with our daughter Ruthie. It is with great pleasure that I present (in translation) Chava's words here, in honor of Martin Luther King Day. ■

Twenty years and only the beginning

Shternie Zwiebel, special to the WJN

A lot can happen in twenty years. The creation of the iPhone and rise of social media, and the sad fade of cassette players, floppy disks, and CDs into obscurity have all occurred in the last two decades. But the last two decades have also seen the emergence of Camp Gan Israel of Ann Arbor into a summer staple that the Jewish children of Ann Arbor look forward to attending year after year.

Registration for the 2020 summer session, which runs from June 29 through August 7, opens on February 1st, and camp director Shternie Zwiebel believes that spots will fill up fast. "This is CGI's twenty-first summer, which means that we have two full decades worth of experience to build on to make Summer 2020 the best one yet, and parents know this," she explains. "We've proved year after year that CGI is the place to be, and this is even more true this year with all the exciting updates we have made to our program. Every summer at CGI is an amazing experience, but this year is truly one that can't be missed!"

One such update is the relocation of the campgrounds from the Clonlara School to Woodland Meadows, a location that CGI used as a test-run last summer. Zwiebel initially decided to relocate to Woodland Meadows out of convenience–only twenty minutes from the center of town, the air-conditioned facility boasts a large cafeteria, impressive sports field, and an amazing playground. After seeing how much the campers enjoyed the campground last year, the decision to stay at Woodland Meadows for the 2020 summer session was an easy one. Of course, CGI will once again offer their popular shuttle bus from Burns Park to Woodland Meadows so that campers can have a safe, smooth trip to and from camp daily.

But the upgrades don't stop there. "We love getting feedback from both our campers and their parents," said Zwiebel. "We recently had a meeting with several camp parents and we are excited to say that there are some big changes coming to the CGI schedule… for the better!" These changes include a new and improved Pioneer Program for 5th through 7th graders that allows the Pioneers to choose between two tracks of either sports or arts and crafts for their Monday/Wednesday schedules, led by a special coach and art teacher specially picked for this demographic. Other changes affect the whole camp, such as changing the swim schedule to Mondays and Wednesdays, and designating Fridays as "Fun Friday!" dedicated to challah baking, the ever-popular Shabbat celebration, and special surprise visitors and shows that the campers are sure to love.

CGI's twenty-first summer will also feature an expanded iCamp schedule, as well as additional family programming during camp, so that everyone can feel like part of the warm and welcoming CGI family. Despite all these changes, one thing will remain the same, much to the delight of camper and counselor alike: Trip Week is here to stay! This year, trip week will take place the week of July 27, and as always, will feature a field trip every single day. This has been immensely popular in the past, and is sure to be equally popular for many summers to come.

A lot can happen in twenty years. But one thing is certain–over the next twenty, and the twenty after that, CGI Ann Arbor will keep growing and giving amazing summers to its campers, year after year. ■

Building my future, thanks to Camp Tavor

by Hadas Kluger

I am writing from Israel, where I am on Workshop 69, an 8-month gap year program coordinated through Habonim Dror North America. Workshop is a program in Israel where we volunteer, balancing study and service while experiencing collective living. It gives us a chance to grow together

and connect deeper to Israeli culture and its history. Workshop is the longest running gap year program in Israel.

Deciding to go on Workshop was one of the hardest, yet most rewarding decisions I've made. Ultimately, I decided I wasn't ready for college and wanted to live in Israel with a loving and amazing "kvutzah." At Camp Tavor–Habonim Dror's summer camp in Three Rivers, Michigan–we use the Hebrew word "kvutzah" to mean our intimate and supportive community of friends who take responsibility for one another. Currently, I'm living collectively in an apartment in Rishon Litzion with fifteen other people from four other Habonim Dror camps. As a part of the program, I coordinate and facilitate youth development programming for high school students. I would have never come on this program if it weren't for Camp Tavor and I will continue to be grateful for that.

I have been going to Camp Tavor since 2011 and have loved literally every minute of my Tavor experience. The people at Tavor have taught me so much about who I am as a person and my life would be truly different without my formative Tavor experiences. I've learned incredible lessons at Tavor, such as how to be a true friend, how to respectfully challenge ideas and how to voice my opinions.

Back in the day, my dad worked at Camp Tavor. Since then, my sister, brother, and I have all attended camp. I am so thankful to have this family connection to Camp Tavor and I can't wait to bring back all the knowledge I have learned on Workshop!

Camp Tavor is an inclusive and nurturing community where campers cultivate a strong sense of social justice and environmental responsibility, a connection with Israel, and a positive personal Jewish Identity.

Tavor has camp programs from five days to seven weeks for campers entering 3rd grade through 12th. To learn more about Camp Tavor summer and year-long programming check out our website at www.camptavor.org, or contact us at 269-215-1399 or info@camptavor.org. ■

Chabad teaches course on Jewish origins of Western civilization"

Rabbi Mintz, special to the WJN

This winter, Rabbi Aharon Goldstein of Chabad House Ann Arbor, Michigan will offer "Judaism's Gifts to the World," a new six-session course by the acclaimed Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), unearthing the Jewish roots of some of the most cherished values of Western civilization.

Beginning Wednesday, January 29, at 9 a.m and 7:30 p.m, students will face toward Jerusalem to discover how common ideas of personal responsibility, the inherent sanctity of human life, institutionalized universal education, human equality, the dignity of a day of rest and devotion to family, and a sense of purpose have their origins in ancient Judaism.

"At a moment in which we are witnessing a rise in antisemitism, it is important to explore what has been the true impact of Jews and Judaism on civilization," Rabbi Goldstein of Chabad House, told WJN. "Understanding Judaism's historical contribution gives us a deeper appreciation for its continuing relevance and a better understanding of how the moral and ethical institutions we take for granted came into being."

"Judaism's Gifts to the World" explores tensions between social and individual responsibility, the implications of monotheism, the sacredness of human life, the meaning of social equality, how Sabbath observance laid the groundwork for the modern weekend, and the underpinnings of our morality.

"It is widely known that Judaism gifted monotheism to the world, but for many, that's where the Jewish contribution ends," explained Rabbi Mordechai Dinerman, the director of curriculum at JLI's New York headquarters, who is also the course's editor. "Even this contribution is often viewed rather narrowly, as a religions contribution, which is only meaningful to those interested in religion. But as this course demonstrates, the universal change effected by the Torah is much broader."

Dr. Darrin M. McMahon, the Mary Brinsmead Wheelock Professor of History at Dartmouth College, has praised "Judaism's Gifts to the World" as timely and important: "There can be no doubt that the Jewish contribution to the civilizations of the West and the world is immense. At a time when noxious critics would doubt that contribution, or deny it altogether, the Jewish Learning Institute has offered a timely reminder of the many gifts the Jewish tradition has bestowed. "Judaism's Gifts to the World" is a gift of its own, providing a scintillating course in the history of ideas and culture by leading experts from around the globe."

As with all JLI programs, "Judaism's Gifts to the World" is designed to appeal to people at all levels of knowledge, including those without any prior experience or background in Jewish learning. All JLI courses are open to the public, and attendees need not be affiliated with a particular synagogue, temple, or other house of worship. Interested students may call 734-995-3276 x 2, or visit www.myJLI.com for registration and for other course-related information. ■

Understanding the Plague of Darkness

Rabbi Jared Anstandig, special to the WJN

We are generally familiar with the ten plagues, reading them annually in the Torah and reciting them (sometimes singing them?) yearly at the Passover Seder. But, we don't necessarily pause to consider how the plagues actually impacted the Egyptians. Some are easy to identify, such as the first plague when the water in Egypt turned to blood, or the sixth plague when boils erupted on the Egyptians.

Rabbi Jared Anstandig

But, what of the ninth plague of darkness? What exactly was this plague and how was it so damaging to the Egyptians? No doubt, an inability to see is discomforting and difficult. But, as a the penultimate plague that immediately preceded the most severe plague of the death of the firstborn, one would expect something with more gravitas. Let us explore two understandings of this plague and why it was so severe.

Rashi (11th century, France), in his commentary on this plague, references a rabbinic tradition that the darkness was more than just the absence of light. According to Rashi, the plague was a palpable thickness that descended upon the Egyptians. This substance surrounding them was so thick, Rashi elaborates, that the Egyptians were completely immobilized. Rashi writes on Exodus 10:22 that the thickness prevented even the simplest of motions: "One who was sitting was unable to stand, and one who was standing was unable to sit down."

Rabbi Baruch Epstein (19th century, Belarus), in his Torah commentary called Torah Temimah, also references this rabbinic tradition. However, he understands this "thickness" of the darkness not as an atmospheric thickness, but as an ocular one. He explains in a comment to Exodus 10:21: "A thickness developed across the pupils of the Egyptians." According to Rabbi Epstein the plague of darkness was, in reality, a plague of blindness.

Still, while Rashi and Rabbi Epstein might disagree about the plague's affect, neither explain how this plague had such a severe impact. Dr. Devora Eshpizai, a retired professor of Bible at Bar Ilan University, suggests that the secret to the severity is stated explicitly in the text itself. The Torah states (Ex. 10:22): "[Egyptians] could not see one another, and for three days no one could get up from where he was." This, Dr. Eshpizai notes, highlights the pain of the plague. In reality, the plague was not darkness. Darkness was merely a means to get to the impact of this plague. The true plague was social isolation. For three days, the Egyptians could not communicate or interact with one another.

Companionship is significant in Judaism. When Adam was all alone before Eve was created, God testifies, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). When a certain Talmudic personality named Choni faced social isolation, he exclaims, "Give me friendship or give me death!" (Taanit 23a). All of us, as humans, desire companionship. Without it, we cannot live. Indeed, in the inaugural episode of the original *The Twilight Zone* television series, a character remarks about our ability to artificially fulfill human needs: "We can feed stomach with concentrates. We can supply microfilm for reading, recreation, even movies of a sort. We can pump oxygen in and waste material out. But there's one thing we can't simulate that's a pretty basic need – man's hunger for companionship, the barrier of loneliness."

Our greatest asset as people is our ability to bond together to create social groups for supporting each other. At the same time, our greatest liability is our tendency to exclude others from those very groups. Our responsibility to ourselves, to our neighbors, and to our community is to ensure than none live in isolation, and that we offer all people the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging and camaraderie.

May we merit to see that which our ancestors were granted during the plague of darkness, that "all the Israelites enjoyed light in their dwellings" (Exodus 10:23). ■

The Power of Repentance

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN

On Shabbat, February 1 we read the portion of the Torah that deals with the last three plagues and, eventually, the exodus from Egypt. The reading begins with God telling Moses that he should go to Pharaoh and warn him about the plague of the locusts. While God is telling Moshe to go to Pharaoh, He also tells him that Pharaoh is not going to listen because his heart will be hardened by God. Consequently, Pharaoh will refuse to release the Jewish people from their bondage in Egypt.

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

What do we learn from this? We learn that the plague of the locusts was not a punishment for Pharaoh's refusal to release the Jewish people–because God almighty hardened Pharaoh's heart to not let the Jewish people out! Why then did God punish Pharaoh with the plague of locusts when it was He who hardened Pharaoh's heart to say no to Moshe's demand?

Some commentators answer this question by saying that Pharaoh got punished with this plague because Pharaoh had free-will in the previous plagues and he chose to keep the Jewish people enslaved. God did not intervene in Pharaoh's decision to refuse to let the Jewish people go. It was Pharaoh's decision in spite of Moshe's warnings. During the first plagues he had the ability to let the Jewish people out–but wickedly chose to go against God's will. As a punishment for exhibiting arrogance toward God when Moshe told him that it was God's will that the Jews be released and making the incorrect choices in the plagues prior to the locusts, God decided to remove the free-will from Pharaoh and make him suffer through the last plagues as a punishment for his previous arrogant choices to defy God's will even though he had the opportunity to comply.

This punishment of the locusts and subsequent plagues were "measure for measure" punishments. This means that God punishes people proportionately to the degree of wickedness of their sins. In this case, for example, when Moses came to Pharaoh and told him, in the name of God, to let the Jewish people out of Egypt, Pharaoh's immediate response was "who is this God that I have to obey Him?" So God said, "Fine. You don't know who I am? I'll show you who I am! I'll show you that you don't have full control of your actions. I can harden your heart and direct it to any way I desire in spite of what you think you desire." This is what He showed to Pharaoh–that even in areas where people think they have free-will, Pharaoh didn't have it. He had to do what God wanted him to do. This was the "measure for measure." Pharaoh said, "Who is God?" God showed him: "Now you know who God is!".

This verse tells us about the plague of the locusts that showed Pharaoh how he was not in control of his own domain, he didn't have the full freedom to do whatever he wanted even when his slaves, servants, deputies and advisors told him to "let the Jewish people go before all of Egypt is destroyed!" Pharaoh called for Moses and intended to tell him to take his people and go. But, at the last minute, he made it conditional–in order to prevent Moses from taking his people out. So at that point, God again had hardened his heart and he didn't have the free-will to let the Jewish people go. This is the answer to the question of why God hardened Pharaoh's heart. It was to punish him for not choosing, during the earlier plagues, when he had his own free-will, to release the Jewish people.

True, it was Pharaoh's choice, in his wickedness to prevent the Jewish people from going out of Egypt and, therefore, at the end, didn't have the free-will to let them out, so the question arises that since he didn't have free-will at the end, how could he be punished for not letting the Jewish people out when it's not within his ability? He didn't have the ability or possibility to let them out. If he had no ability to decide in favor of the Jewish people another question arises: Why did God tell Moses to warn Pharaoh about the plague of locusts, and those that would follow, if Pharaoh had no free-will to make the proper choice? The answer to this question can be found in the book *The Tanya*, by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. In it the author says that there are two levels by which a person can commit a sin. One is a regular sin resulting from giving in to improper desires. This can be followed by sincere repentance, which God accepts. But what if a person deliberately sins with the thought that they will use Teshuva and receive forgiveness? They might think, "Since God is forgiving, I'll do whatever I want and ask for forgiveness after the fact." The Talmud says that, in a case like this, the ability to do Teshuva and be forgiven is taken away because the sin was committed deliberately with the premeditation that Teshuva will save them. A general rule is that Teshuva doesn't help when the sin was pre-meditated and deliberate and with the intention to do Teshuva in this manner. Nevertheless, The Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman says if a person genuinely felt great remorse after committing this type of sin, and knows that repentance (Teshuva) will not work–if they are persistent in their feelings of sincere remorse and in their pleadings to God for forgiveness, eventually God will accept the repentance. True, that Heaven will not help this person, but through their own sincere, persistent efforts eventually God will relent and forgive.

This is similar to Pharaoh's predicament. He didn't have any free-will to let the Jews out so why should he be punished for that? But, nevertheless, if he had pushed himself to go against his impulse to keep the Jews, and vehemently and persistently pushed himself to let them go, he could have overcome the hardened heart and let the Jewish people go. Therefore, he was punished because he didn't try hard enough to overcome his urge to go against God's will.

This story leads us to an important lesson regarding the power of Teshuva. Even someone as wicked as Pharaoh still has the ability to have his repentance accepted if he insists on changing his ways and sincerely asking for forgiveness.

So if repentance is still available to a person as unimaginably wicked as Pharaoh, for sure forgiveness is available to a person whose sins are much fewer and milder. Especially if that person has a portion of their soul that is a part of God, as the Jewish soul. If they believe in God, even while sinning, they always have the ability to do Teshuva and return to doing God's will. God even anticipates with joy the return of this Jewish person even if they went so far as to fall into the category of one who "can't do Teshuva." But that is only externally and technically. If the person truly and sincerely cares to do Teshuva, they can always return to God in "the blink of an eye." ■

Snapshots in time: a review of "Take Your Pick" at UMMA

By Deborah Dash Moore

Ever since Eastman Kodak invented the box camera in 1888, all sorts of people who could afford to purchase a camera have indulged its power to fix and transform vision. The famous Jewish American photographer Alfred Stieglitz despised the box camera. He compared it to the bicycle craze that swept America in the same years. Kodak's alluring slogan, "You press the button, we do the rest," convinced everyone that anyone could take a photograph. As someone seeking to raise the caliber of photography to an art form, Stieglitz recognized how the box camera popularized photography as a democratic pastime rather than an elite mode of art.

Snapshots, the term for the type of photographs taken with a simple box camera, soon competed with more formal studio portraits. As the word suggested, snapshots captured all sorts of moments. Pictures of family outings, of prized possessions and scenes of beauty, of celebrations and times of triumph soon crowded living room mantels and filled photo albums. These photographs primarily pictured the middle class. The subsequent invention of the Brownie camera transformed snapshots. They became ubiquitous; so much so, that tons of them were discarded.

There were lots of reasons to throw out photographs: perhaps they were blurred, or they portrayed people who had died and could no longer be identified, or they conveyed memories that left a bitter taste—reminders of divorces or quarrels or deaths that didn't bear remembering. What one generation wanted to preserve, the next generation often considered a burden.

Many of these anonymous photographs ended up in flea markets or other random places where collectors could cheaply acquire them. Peter J. Cohen started collecting discarded snapshots, or "found photographs," and categorizing them, seeing them as unparalleled social documents offering a window into worlds and times past. His storied collection of over 60,000 photos divided into a hundred categories has provided the source for books and, most recently, an exhibit, "Take Your Pick: Collecting Found Photographs," at University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA).

Assistant Curator of Photography Jennifer M. Friess selected 1000 photographs from Cohen's collection, mounted them on walls of UMMA in its new ArtGym gallery, and invited the public to choose their favorites. On the wall she posted key questions: "Who and what should be represented in the Museum's collection, and how should we decide? What will future audiences think is important for the Museum to display and study from twentieth-century American life?"

The opportunity to play curator attracted tens of thousands of entries. Should the photograph of a brick wall be acquired? Should the somewhat blurry picture of a person leaping join the collection? What about the young African American man standing next to his automobile? Or maybe one of the scenic shots? Perhaps one of the very old photographs, dating to the Nineteenth Century, should be chosen? Or should UMMA acquire one of the World War II photographs of young men in uniform that documented a crucial period in American history?

The exhibit offered seemingly endless choices prompting viewers to reflect upon which pictures moved them, which ones they really liked. It invited people not just to choose but to write down what they thought about specific photographs. UMMA subsequently scanned both photo and comments and put them together online. This democratic process included all age groups.

When I visited in December, another woman commented how several of the photographs could have been hers: same living room window, same style furniture and wallpaper. Just different people sitting on the couch in front of the window.

At the time of my visit, photograph number 1000 had the most votes. It portrayed a young couple in bathing suits standing on the sand, with the sea behind them. He has his arm around her and looks at her solicitously while she looks at the camera. The date stamped on the side of the print is 1954. Looking at the photo today, however, what stands out is that he is white and she is black. The photo reminds us that even in the 1950s, before the Civil Rights movement transformed America, women and men actually bridged the barriers segregating African Americans.

For this article I nominated two photographs with specific Jewish content.

One (848) is a version of the classic bar mitzvah boy photo and appears to be posed. A bespectacled young man wearing a tallit stands in front of what may be the parochet covering the ark (there is Hebrew lettering on the cloth). He holds an open book and looks down, pretending to read. The yarmulke on his head is white and he wears a white shirt and tie for the occasion. The mood is reverent.

The second photograph (430) captures a moment in Jewish time. It depicts a boy in short pants playing in front of a fireplace with a Chanuka menorah with candles on the mantelpiece. Bookcases filled with books flank the fireplace. The books include a number that appear to be part of a series, perhaps an encyclopedia. A large stuffed chair with a white crocheted doily stands to the right of the fireplace. Above it, in front of the window, sits a heavy metal clock. Over the fireplace is a painting of the city with tall buildings, while next to the menorah are a pair of framed photographs. Although the frame and placement next to the menorah suggest ancestors, one cannot know. All of the details indicate a type of prosperous Jewish home.

Found photographs invite storytelling, and an attention to details to try to imagine what motivated the photographer.

Professional photographers similarly seek out stories. For a chance to glimpse the world of New York City's Vanished Cafeterias, visit the Lane Hall exhibit of photographs taken in 1975 by Marcia Bricker Halperin. ■

Vanished Cafeterias: Marcia Bricker Halperin exhibit

Kelsey Robinette Keeves, special to the WJN

An exhibit of photographs of the cafeterias that fed New Yorkers in the early to mid-Twentieth Century will be featured in the Institute for Research on Women and Gender's gallery in Lane Hall during the 2020 Winter Semester. Marcia Bricker Halperin kicked off the exhibit of her photographs with a lecture titled

"Kibitz & Nosh: NYC's Vanished Cafeterias" at the Frankel Center on January 16.

As a young art student, Halperin found that cafeterias gave her a window into the lives of people she wouldn't usually come across in her everyday life. "One February day, while photographing reflections in store windows, my fingers froze solid onto my Honeywell Pentax camera," recalled Halperin. "That's when I headed through the revolving doors into Dubrow's Cafeteria. I took a ticket from the man at the door and found myself looking out at a tableau of amazing faces. There was light, reflections, patterns, textures, sweeping architectural features and remarkable subjects all for the price of a cup of coffee, then 25 cents."

Her lecture focused on the role cafeterias played assimilating Jewish culture into the mainstream of twentieth-century America and vice versa. Cafeterias like Dubrow's served popular Jewish style dishes, like blintzes, as well as less traditional dishes, like shrimp salad. "It became a place to experience the world outside of what you would have at home," stated Halperin. "I look forward to having people learn about the golden era of cafeterias, a time when self-serve restaurants were in every city and contributed to vibrant civic life."

She first discovered her passion for photography while studying art at Brooklyn College. "The subtlety of tone in photography just touched me. It appeals as an art to me. To control tones and light, when I got it to the process of developing, it hooked me."

After graduating with a Master of Fine Arts from Brooklyn College, she was selected to be a part of the CETA Artists Project in New York City, a federally funded employment program for artists that operated from 1978 to 1980. The program connected unemployed artists with community sponsors to develop public artworks, give performances, and teach classes. One of her projects was working with tenant organizers at Housing Conservation Coordinators. She documented the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan, taking pictures of apartments that were neglected by landlords to help the tenants win lawsuits and advocate for homesteaders.

After the CETA project ended, she worked for the New York City Department of Education, teaching art and special education for over 35 years. Since her retirement from teaching, she has been revisiting her early work, which inspired her to approach future work with a fresh lens. "There was a drive to be creative and do things that is kind of hard to recreate. I think I'm striving toward to that again. I'm trying to inspire myself through my past work."

She is currently working on a documentation project of Hasidim celebrating Jewish holidays at Coney Island that originally started in 1981. She remarked that between archiving her photos from the 1970s and 80s, and her current documentation work she can see a thread that connects her work from the very beginning to now. "I have found that over the years photography is my way to understand my place in the Jewish community." ■

Celebrating Novy God and Hanuchrismas in Israel

by Shifra Epstein

I first observed the holiday of Novy God, the Russian New Year, celebrated by Israelis from the former Soviet Union (FSU) during my residence in Rehovot, Israel in 2017. It coincided with the new hip trend of celebrating Hanuchrismas among Israelis. Novy God in celebrating the new year on the night of December 31, was actually invented by Stalin who introduced the Novy God after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution as a secular alternative to the religious holiday of Christmas.

Novy God was brought to Israel during the great wave of immigration of nearly a million Russian speakers (known in Israel as Russian Jews). The holiday incorporates several features from the Christmas holiday including decoration of the home with a tree, Yolka; and with the Santa-like character known as Ded Moroz, "Grandfather Frost," or "Father Frost."

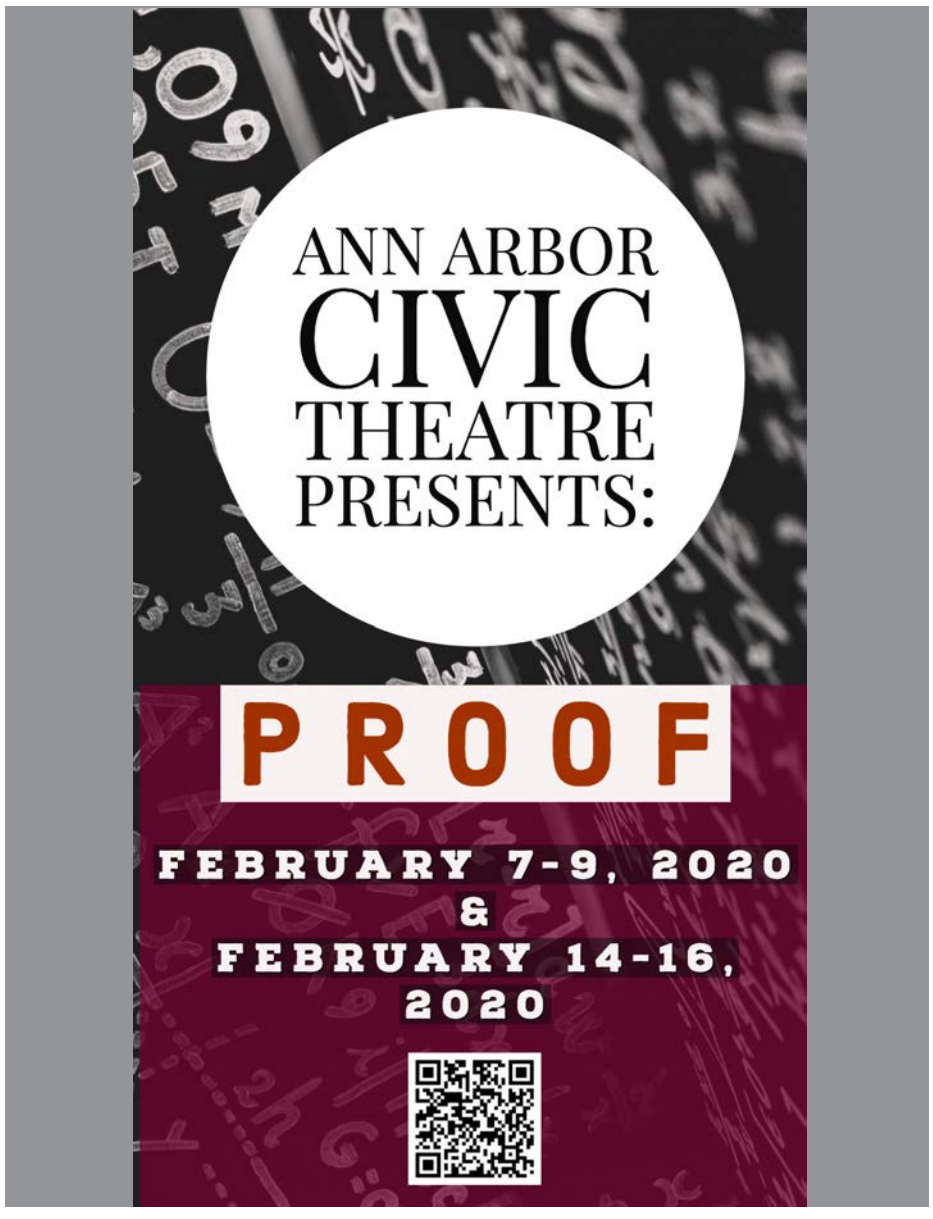
An interesting perspective on Novy God is provided by one of my favorite stores in Rehovot, Arayot Haaretz (The Lions of the Land), located downtown on Had Ha'Am Street in the midst of a cluster of shops owned by Jews of the FSU. Arayot Haaretz specializes in books and souvenirs mostly made in Russia. Alon, the owner, who sports a knitted kipa, is a member of Dati-Leumi, the National Religious party. He has no problem selling a red string bracelet to guard against evil side by side with icons of Russian Saints. My visit there in 2017 was the Chinese Year of the Rooster, and the shop was crowded with miniature colorful glass roosters.

Two weeks before Novy God, the shop twinkled with a bountiful display of Santa dolls and synthetic spruce trees adorned with tinsel and baubles. Especially popular among Israelis and Russians were colorful lights to wrap around the tree.

When I visited the shop several days before Novy God, I noticed a woman with her daughter, an officer in the Israeli army, consulting with Alon about which tree to buy. From my conversation with the daughter, I discovered that it was quite common to release FSU soldiers so that they can celebrate Novy God with their families. They bought a palm tree, as a Yolka, and were on their way to Tiv Taam (Best Taste), the supermarket known for its Russian delicacies from the old country such as herring, caviar, and jellied calf's foot, as well as vodka and bubbly wine to toast the New Year.

Both Novy God and Hanuchrismas have taken over restaurants and shop windows where Christmas trees and Santa Clauses are exhibited side-by-side with Chanukah menorahs lit with candles. On TV, performers dressed like Santa Claus sing Chanukah songs to Christmas melodies. In the picture, you can see how the supermarket Tiv Taam has appropriated the Hanuchrismas trend to package and sell Sandman Port sparkling wine "for members only," with Happy Hanuchrismas Ho Ho Ho printed on it.

While in Rehovot, I also visited the M. Y. D Goliyan company, located in the municipality of Kiryat Ekron on the border with Rehovot. Goliyan is one of the largest companies in Israel specializing in importing and retailing household decorations. Each year, two weeks before Christmas the company conducts an exhibition of thousands of objects for Christmas, mostly imported from China. It seems that Christmas has also arrived to Israel. However, Christmas in Israel is a topic for another article. ■



ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY
EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

SUSTAINABLE ANN ARBOR | **FORUM ON CARBON NEUTRALITY IN THE MOBILITY SECTOR**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13 • 7-8:30PM
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WASHTENAW COUNTY CSA FAIR

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16 • 12-3:00PM
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Obituaries

Toby Citrin, a long-time adjunct University of Michigan professor in the Department of Health Management and Policy, died January 6, 2020, at the age of 85 in Santa Barbara, California. He was a lawyer by training, but his first love was advocating for social justice. Toby grew up in Detroit, attended Harvard College and Harvard Law School, and spent the next 10 years working in his Detroit-centered family business. After the business was sold he transitioned into academe when a series of voluntary positions in Detroit's and Michigan's health systems led to his being invited to join the UM Public Health faculty.

Throughout his career, Citrin held numerous positions on state and local public health planning, policy, and advisory bodies and chaired the governor's commission that developed Michigan's new public health code in the late 1970's. Citrin's research focused on community-based public health practice and public health genomics and policy development, where he worked to bring awareness on the effects of genetics and the environment on health to communities of color and to K-12 schools across Michigan.

Well known for his advocacy, Citrin played a significant role in developing and coordinating community public health programs. This work led to the establishment of groundbreaking community-based public health initiatives including the Detroit-Genesee County Community-Based Public Health Consortium, which laid the foundation for the school's community-academic partnerships in Detroit and Flint.

Citrin was director of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded Community Health Scholars Program, which trained a group of postdoctoral scholars in community-based participatory research based at Michigan Public Health, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Johns Hopkins University, and Morgan State University. Citrin was also instrumental in the creation of the Community-Based Public Health Caucus of the American Public Health Association.

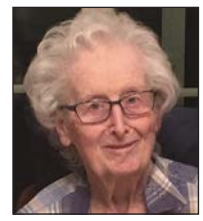
In addition to his work as an adjunct professor in the Department of Health Management and Policy, Citrin was also director of the Center for Public Health and Community Genomics (CPHCG) and co-director of the University of Michigan Life Sciences and Society Program (UMLSSP). Throughout his career he was highly regarded for his commitment to social justice, community engagement, and integrity in scholarship. He had a broad network of colleagues at the school and in universities and communities across the country who counted him as a collaborator, mentor, and friend.

His work in Public Health connected him to another of his social justice engagements, work for a two-state solution of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. After the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993, Citrin worked to form a connection with Palestinian health organizations conducting research and developing community-based clinics throughout the West Bank. His continuing relationship with Palestinian colleagues and his many visits to Israel and the occupied territories led to his conviction that the status-quo could not last. He became active in J Street where he became a national leader, and coordinated its advocacy activities in Michigan.

Citrin was a founding member of Detroit's Temple Israel in the 1940s; a creator, with Carl Levin, of a Reconstructionist congregation in Detroit; and a few years ago joined Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation.

Elizabeth Brown Ensor (Thomson), born January 14, 1927 in Glasgow, Scotland, died November 23, 2019 in Belmont, Michigan. Beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Betty was born in Glasgow, Scotland to James and Elizabeth Brown Thomson. While her parents were becoming established in the U.S., she spent most of her youth living in Scotland with her beloved "Nanny," her grandmother Catherine MacLachlan Brown.

Betty's skill and ingenuity in solving problems of all kinds were grounded in her mantra, "What would Nanny do?" Betty immigrated to the U.S. in the height of World War II, on the last military convoy that evacuated civilians from the British Isles. She excelled academically, graduated from high school at age 16, and attended business school, often tutoring her older classmates in shorthand and bookkeeping. Betty lived with her parents in Hamilton, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia before settling in Detroit, where she met and, on August 14, 1948, married the love of her life, Ronald Ensor. Betty worked as an administrative assistant at a large insurance company in Detroit before starting a family. She then turned her formidable skills to running her household. Betty's many talents included gardening, handicrafts of all kinds, and writing poetry. Her greatest gift was her genuine interest in, and compassion for, other people. She doted on her family and friends with unconditional love, kindness, and generosity; as one friend put it, "She made me feel like what I did mattered, and also like I was enough no matter what I did."



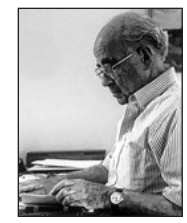
Betty was deeply loved by everyone whose lives she touched. Betty is survived by her son Douglas (Joy Wolfe) Ensor and daughter Debra Martin; grandchildren Sarah (Ingrid Diran) Ensor, Will (Katie) McConnell, Tim (Melissa) McConnell, and Hannah (Aisha Sabatini Sloan) Ensor; and great-grandchildren Taylor, Crystianna, Brayden and Sullivan McConnell and Lily and Beau Taylor. She was preceded in death by her parents, infant grandson Daniel Ensor, sister Cathie Falin, son-in-law Randy Howard, and her beloved Ron. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Emmanuel Hospice, the University of Michigan LSA Emergency Scholarship Fund at https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#!/give/basket/fund/314649, or the charity of your choice.

Jay H.Lessing, of Milwaukee, passed away peacefully on November 1, 2019 at the age of 64 years. Beloved husband of Jo-Anne Lessing (nee Barczak) for 32 years. Loving son of Fanchon Lessing. Dear brother of Louise (Alan) Fligiel. Fond brother-in-law of Craig (Barbara) Barczak, Cheryl Barczak, and Janice (James) Wilkins. Further survived by nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. Jay worked in the machine trades for 15 years before leaving to finish his college degree at the age of 46. After completing his Bachelors of Arts degree in 2002, he became a Para Professional Teacher's Aide at Milwaukee Public Schools working with special needs and autistic children. He retired in 2015. He loved fishing; with an emphasis on fly fishing and fly tying. His love of the sport only increased as he and his wife took many trips out to Montana to fish and explore the beauty of the west. His last trip out was a "guys" trip in September. Jay had many interests and hobbies including hiking, road trips, history, music, and walking the neighborhood with his beloved Ellie, chatting with neighbors along the way.The family would like to thank the staff at Aurora St. Luke's Neuro ICU for their outstanding and compassionate care.

Evelyn Lillian Liberman (nee Horowitz) was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1928, and attended Central High School. In 1947 she married Murray Liberman and remained happily married for 70 years. She and Murray ran Liberman's Delicatessen in Detroit until they sold it in 1961. She then worked as a secretary in the Southfield school system and later opened a knit shop in Southfield. Eventually she worked for Hospice of Southeastern Michigan (now called Hospice of Michigan), where among other accomplishments she was instrumental in starting The Jewish Hospice and Chaplaincy Network. In the 1970s she and Murray opened Liberman's Meat Products; while there Evelyn worked on getting the Worker Compensation bill signed into law in Michigan.

She was the daughter of the late Sarah Milgrom Horowitz Kalish and the late Elia Horowitz; sister of the late Louis (the late Helen) Horowitz, the late Joseph (the late Doris) Horowitz, the late Max (the late Beatrice) Horowitz, and the late Lawrence (the late Phyllis) Horowitz; and the wife of the late Murray Liberman. Evelyn and Murray moved from Southfield to Detroit and enjoyed living in the city for 31 years before moving to Glacier Hills Senior Living Community in Ann Arbor. She is survived by her children Anita Liberman-Lampear (Alan Lampear), Reena Liberman (Peter Nagourney), and Wallace Liberman (Stephanie Dickinson); her grandchildren Sara Lampear, Ari Lampear (Caren Minkoff), Tal Nagourney, Micah Nagourney, Shayna Liberman, Tori (Cameron) Burke, and Kayli Liberman; and her great-grandchildren Eva and Ammi Lampear. She is also survived by many loving cousins, nieces and nephews.

Gerhard "Jerry" Loewenberg, 91,of Iowa City, died peacefully at home on Dec. 28, 2019. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Iowa City Hospice or Temple Judah.



He was born in Berlin, Germany, Oct. 2, 1928, to Walter and Annemarie (Cassirer) Loewenberg. He, his parents and his sister, Marianne, emigrated to New York in 1936. Jerry graduated from Bronx High School of Science in 1945, and continued his education at Cornell University, where he earned his bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in government.

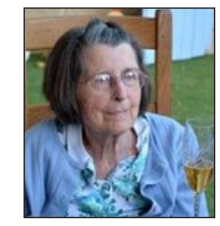
Jerry married Ina Perlstein on Aug. 22, 1950. In 1953, he joined the faculty at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass., where he taught in the department of political science until 1969, serving also as acting academic dean of the college in the turbulent year, 1968 to 1969. Jerry moved to the University of Iowa in 1969, where he was a professor of political science until his retirement in 2003. During that period, he also served as chair of the political science department more than once, and was dean of the College of Liberal Arts from 1984 through 1992. Jerry founded the Comparative Legislative Research Center at the university and the professional academic journal, Legislative Studies Quarterly. He was an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

After his retirement, Jerry continued to write and publish as well as to teach courses regularly. He also taught popular classes at the Iowa City Senior Center. Jerry was a longtime member of Temple Judah in Cedar Rapids, including serving on the synagogue board. From his youth he loved classical music and enjoyed concerts at home and away. Anyone who knew him was aware of his relentless optimism. Jerry is survived by his wife of 69 years, Ina; his children, Deborah (Richard Ball) and Michael; brother-in-law, Barry Head; grandchildren, Sarah (Joshua Hakala), Joshua and Jacob Ball and Zoë Loewenberg; and three great-grandchildren. Online condolences may be sent to www.lensingfuneral.com.

Darlene Weisblatt Mood, 6/24/1936 - 1/11/2020 Ypsilanti. Darlene Weisblatt Mood died suddenly in the evening on 1/11/2020. She was a mother, grandmother, aunt, sister, cousin, and very dear friend to many. She was a devoted wife to her husband of many years. Darlene was born in Watertown, Wisconsin to a her beloved father, Arnold Weisblatt and mother Rose Weisblatt. Her younger brother Edward was born several years later. Darlene was the apple of her father's eye and was devoted to him throughout her life. She spent her early life with her beloved Grandmother, Aunts, Uncles and cousins in Chicago Illnois and later moved to Michigan to pursue her undergraduate degree in music therapy. Later in life she returned to school and graduated with a doctoral degree in psychology. She was a valued professor at Wayne State University in the college of nursing and contributed a great deal to our understanding of patient self-care. Darlene developed a number of tools utilized by cancer survivors which helped improve both their quality of life and survival rate by teaching them skills in self-care. She cared deeply for the people she helped as well the many colleagues and students she worked with over a very long and successful career. Darlene had a wide and varied circle of close friends. She was known for her intelligence, loyalty, deep commitment to her friends and the joy with which she gave parties and gifts. Darlene loved music and art and played a mean game of Bridge. She loved the water and traveling and enjoyed many evenings in the large gardens of her home of 30 years. Darlene loved to relax with friends in deep, thoughtful conversation. She was deeply loved by many and will be missed. Donations can be made in her name to the American Cancer Society.

Renée Eisenberg

Renée Eisenberg passed away peacefully in the arms of her immediate family, and surrounded by other family members, on December 8, 2019, in Santa Cruz, California. She is survived by her three children, Sharon Mullowney, Joseph Eisenberg and Andrea Eisenberg, her sister Gitta Ryle, and grandchildren Chloe and Heather Mullowney, Sophie and Thea Spindel and Eli and Celeste Meisel.



Renée was born Renée Spindel in Vienna Austria in 1929, where she lived until the age of 10, when the Nazis invaded. She and her sister, Gitta, age 7, escaped on their own to France through the support of the "OSE" Oeuvre de Secours Aux Enfants while their mother remained behind to look after her parents. The two girls were taken in by a string of brave organizations, individuals, a convent and finally the Rivoires, a farm family in the south of France. Renee maintained a close relationship with the Rivoires for the rest of her life.

Seven years later, the girls reunited with their mother in England, and the three of them

Continued on page 34

Vitals

Condolences

Louise Fligiel and Fanchon Lessing on the death of brother and son, Jay Lessing, November 1.
Anita Liberman-Lampear on the death of her mother, Evelyn Liberman, November 10.
Albert Hermalin on the death of his wife, Jolene Hermalin, November 14.
Doug Ensor (Joy Wolfe Ensor) on the death of his mother, Elizabeth Ensor, November 23.
Trina Romolino Fuller (James Fuller) on the death of her father, Benedetto Romolino Jr., November 24.
Renee Pinsky on the death of her mother, Hannah Wayne, November 20.
Valerie Galler on the death of her sister, Ruth Ferguson, December 2.
Nanette Gill on the death of her husband, Stephen Gill, December 4.
Joe Eisenberg and Ella August on the death of Joe's mother, Renée Eisenberg on December 8.
Nanette Gill on the death of her mother, Ina Mae Goodman, December 17.
Deborah Ball, Sarah Hakala, Jacob Ball, and Joshua Ball on the death of father and grandfather, Gerhard Loewenberg, December 28.
Zevi Bareket on the death of his father, Arie Buchwalter, December 29.
The family of Toby Citrin on his death, January 4 in California.

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moved to Detroit, Michigan within a year. Though Renée had to learn English and catch up on formal schooling that she missed during the war, she persevered, becoming a nurse a few years after being relocated to the United States.

While in nursing school Renée met her husband Morris Eisenberg (Nov. 23, 1925 – May 16, 2016) to whom she was married for 63 years. Renée and Morris raised their three children in Northridge, California, near Los Angeles. She made sure that her children experienced the things that she missed out on during her childhood: they participated in sports, music, dance, art lessons. She used her nursing skills by volunteering for the Red Cross. She also volunteered in nursing homes to teach arts and crafts. She enjoyed biking at the beach, playing tennis and exploring new places in LA with her walking group. She and Morris traveled the world, and Renee especially loved her many visits to her French family.

In 2016, Renée and Morris relocated to Santa Cruz to be near family. The last years of Renée's life were connected to her sister Gitta and daughter Sharon and family friends. Until the end of her life, Renée cherished being with family and consuming lots of chocolate and pastries, going to concerts, and enjoying the ocean.

In lieu of flowers, please consider sending donations to: "OSE" Oeuvre de Secours Aux Enfants -

Stephen Joel Gill, 72, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, died on December 4, 2019. Beloved husband of 49 years of Nanette Gill. Devoted son of the late Udell and the late Jessie Gill. Loving son-in-law of Ina Mae Goodman and the late Gene Goodman. Cherished brother of Daniel (the late Rose McNulty) Gill and Charles (Sylvia) Gill. Dear brother-in-law of Robert (Patricia) Goodman. Proud uncle of Matthew Gill and Aaron Gill. Interment at Arborcrest Memorial Park. ■

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